

adbusters

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COOL FASCISMO

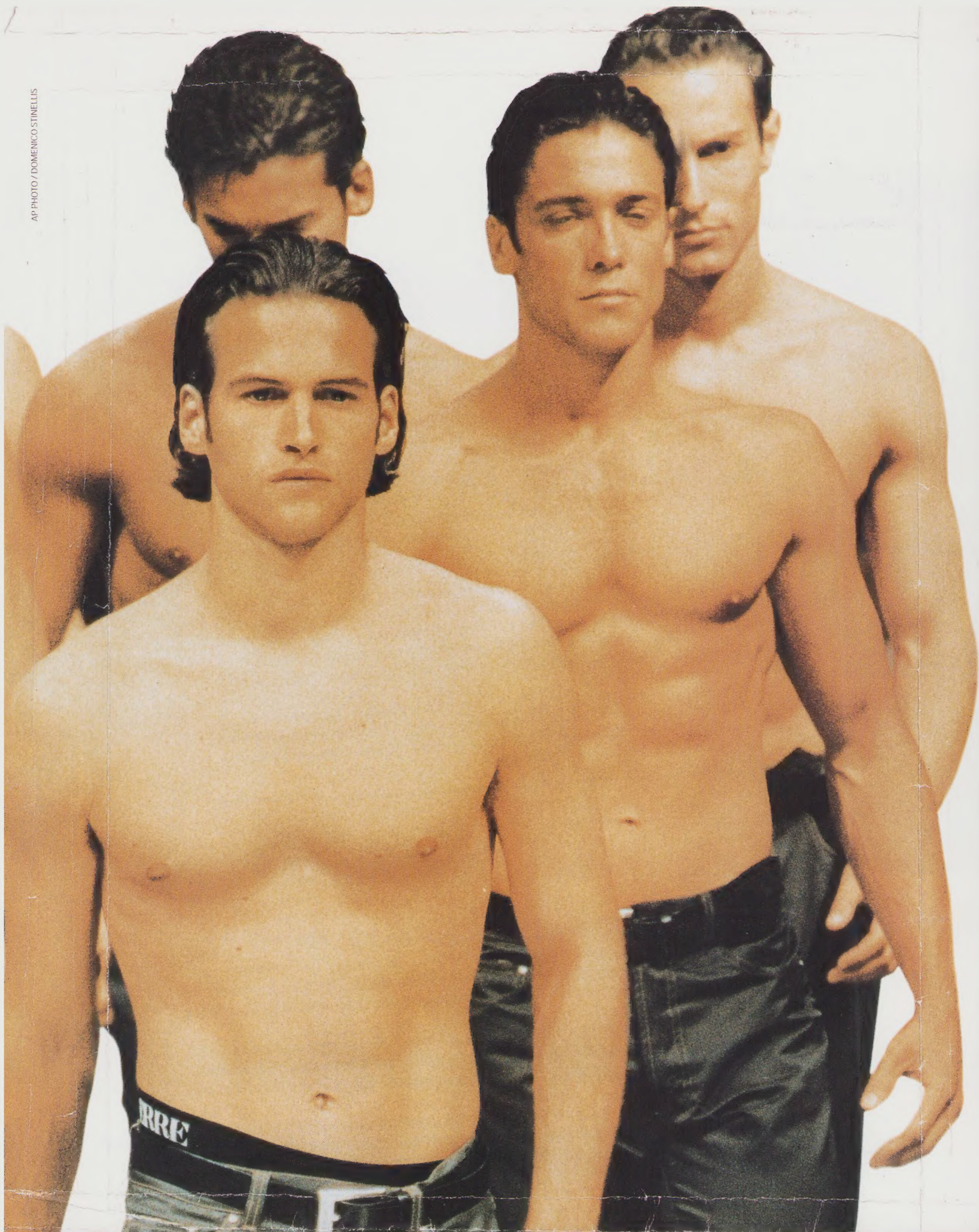
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democracy = capitalism =
= cool

- > Hi. First of all, you are fat. You are ugly. Your breath stinks. You are
- > unpopular. You are not witty. You are not smart. You are stupid. You are
- > nothing. You have low self-esteem. You have cellulite. You have
- > blackheads. Your teeth are not white enough. Your eyeballs are not
- > white enough.
- > Hola. Primero que nada, estás gorda. Eres fea. Tu aliento apesta. No eres
- > popular. No eres ocurrente. No eres inteligente. Eres estúpida. No eres
- > nada. Tienes baja auto-estima. Tienes celulitis. Tienes barros y espinillas.
- > Tus dientes no son suficientemente blancos. Lo blanco de tus ojos no es
- > suficientemente blanco.
- > Salut. Primo, t'es grosse. T'es moche. T'as mauvaise haleine. On t'évite.
- > T'es pas maligne. T'es pas douée. T'es bête. T'es nulle. T'as pas une bien
- > haute image de toi. T'as de la cellulite. T'as des points noirs. T'as pas les
- > dents blanches. T'as le blanc des yeux jaunes.



- > Secondly, you are fat. You should go on a diet. Your tits are not big
- > enough. Your tits are too small. Your tits are neither big enough nor small
- > enough. Your ass is too big. You are one of the crowd. You are not very
- > sexy. You have no style. Your clothes suck. Your shoes suck. You are
- > too thin.

- > En segundo término, estás gorda. Deberías ponerte a dieta. Tus tetas no
- > son lo suficientemente grandes. Tus tetas no son ni lo suficientemente
- > grandes, ni lo suficientemente pequeñas. Tu trasero es demasiado grande.
- > Eres una más en la multitud. No eres demasiado sexy. No tienes estilo. Tú
- > ropa es una mierda. Tus zapatos son una mierda. Eres demasiado delgada.

- > Secondo, t'es grosse. T'as qu'à faire du régime. T'as pas de seins. T'es
- > plate. Tes seins sont ni assez gros ni assez petits. T'as des grosses fesses.
- > T'as l'air de rien. T'as rien d'attirant. T'as pas d'allure. T'es mal fringuée.
- > T'as des pompes horribles. T'es maigre.



The psychological essence of cool is self-invention, coupled with a hyper-acute awareness of such self-invention in other people. It amounts to the creation of a calm psychic mask to hide inner disturbance.

La esencia psicológica de lo "cool" es la auto-inención, aunada a una hiperaguda conciencia de dicha auto-inención en otras personas. Se convierte en la creación de una máscara de tranquilidad psíquica que esconde tu alboroto interno.

Être cool c'est psychologiquement l'invention du soi doublée d'une reconnaissance pointue de cette même invention du soi chez l'autre. Il en résulte la création psychique d'un calme apparent qui masque l'agitation intérieure.

- > You need to stay tuned. You are lactose intolerant. Your cholesterol is
- > high. Your calcium is low. Your blood pressure is high. You are iron
- > deficient. Your diet is poor. You need to take some pills. You are not
- > happy enough.



PHOTO: JULIE SLEAFORD

- > Necesitas seguir informada. Eres intolerante a la lactosa. Tu colesterol
 - > está alto. Tu calcio está alto. Tu presión sanguínea está alta. Tienes
 - > deficiencia de hierro. Tú dieta es pobre. Necesitas tomar algunas píldoras.
 - > No eres suficientemente feliz.
-
- > Faut que tu restes branché. Tu tolères pas le lactose. T'as trop de
 - > cholestérol. Tu manques de calcium. Tu fais de la tension. Tu manques de
 - > fer. Tu manges mal. T'as qu'à prendre des pilules. T'es pas assez heureux.

I should have known better. I've been reading your publication for a few years and thought I had a pretty good idea of your position on the issues we face today. Thus it was with great concern that I began reading your most recent issue [Adbusters #48] and discovered you were pro-war! How could you turn your back on those of us who put great faith in your ability to promote an open, aware, no-bullshit society?

Then I got to the center of the issue.

JESSICA SWEENEY
Portland, Oregon

It seems you added Kris Johansen's "The War Doves" [Adbusters #48] to illustrate the new or modified language of fascism – as explained by Richard Falk in the same issue. "The War Doves" screams fascism like a cobra spits venom. It is the liberal fascism that hides in the corners while deceiving us into thinking it is on the side of life. Most conservatives wear their fundamentalist affinities on their sleeves; to fight fascism and succeed, we must confront liberalism. It was liberalism in Germany that ceded power to the Nazis, it was liberalism in Spain that back-stabbed and sold out the anti-fascist warriors and workers, and it will be liberalism here in North America that will give way to fascism again.

DERI AIR
By email

The following is an oft-repeated experiment in hypnosis. The subject is hypnotized and told that an ice-cold bucket of water is lukewarm. He is told to put his arm in the bucket. The hypnotist says, "How does it feel?" "Fine." "Is it uncomfortable at all?" "No, it's nice and warm." Then the subject is given paper and a pen and told to let his free hand write without thinking about anything at

all, just letting it move by itself. The hand writes, "Stop the experiment! It hurts! It's freezing!" Below the hypnotized level of consciousness there is always this aware observer.

This is the experiment we are now doing on a global scale. Media and advertising have hypnotized us to the materialist culture, while underneath there is a level of awareness screaming, "Stop the experiment! We are consuming a planet! This is insane!" It certainly helps to explain the pandemic of depression and violence and stress-related disease. The most important thing we can do is to stop the mad hypnotists.

LINDA PALTER
Muskegon, Michigan

I was in France during the war in Iraq, and American culture never lost its cool. The majority of movies, TV shows and commercials were American. The people were totally excited to find out where I came from. They love American music, clothes and, even though they say they are against it, they love McDonald's. What they are against is American politics. They loved Clinton . . . they hate Bush. They see him as a backwards, stupid buffoon. As I made clear to them, the majority of young Americans do, too.

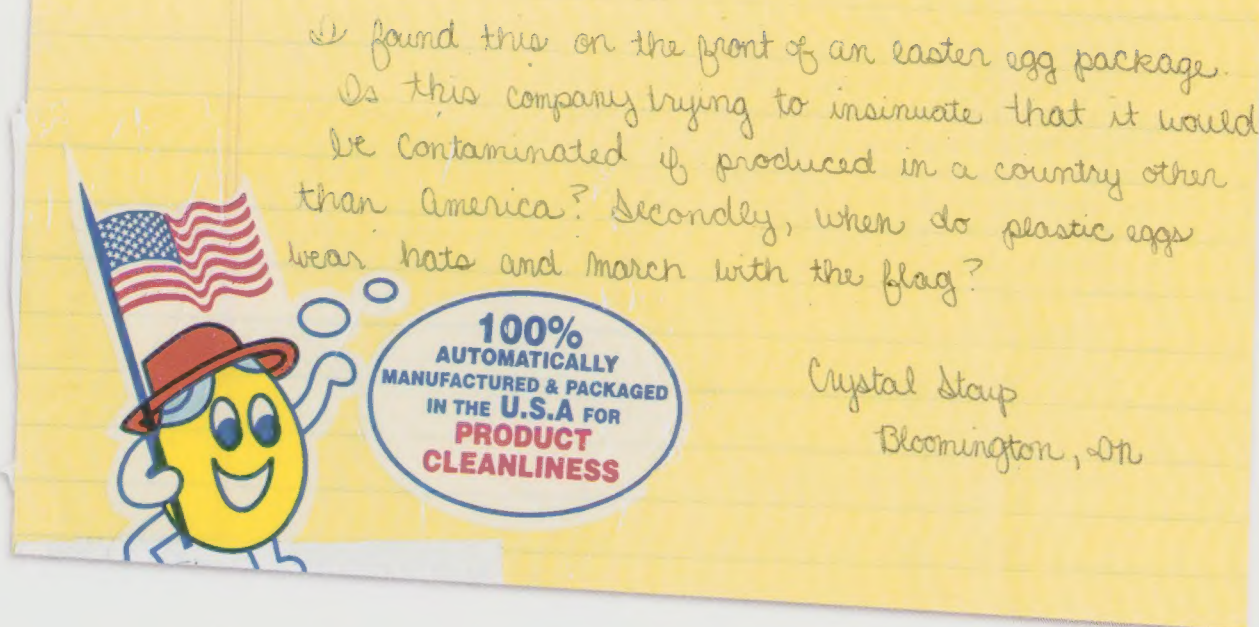
Ours is a puritanical society. The French love to drink wine, smoke cigarettes, have sex, eat pastries – they love their 35-hour work week. But they'll settle for doing it in their Gap reverse-fit jeans while bobbing their heads to the beat of Eminem.

NADIA CHRISTINA TUMA
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

It is potentially very damaging for Adbusters to categorically and repeatedly trash psychopharmacology. For many people, anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medicines mean the difference between leading a productive life and leading a life filled with doubt, suicidal thoughts or active self-harm. These drugs are not the answer, but a part of a treatment that needs to be motivated by a person's desire for health.

Name withheld by request

I'm sick and tired of the increasingly aggressive pharmaceutical industry TV spots and print ads. A pill solves your problem. Ask your doctor for brand X. That's the simple "media literacy" message. The industry has turned this country into a population of drug addicts. I could relate my perfectly healthy 82-year-old mother's story: she walked into



chemotherapy last year and came out with a clean bill of health from oncologist, radiologist and surgeon, only to be told by her family doctor that she needs pills for borderline high blood pressure.

How do I, we, change the culture? The problem is, everyone is in the hip pocket of this powerful industry. All I want to do is give world consumers back their common sense and freedom to question and say no their doctors. And perhaps to get the Federal Trade Commission to heavily sanction pharma ads, as they already do with tobacco marketing.

I'm ready for a fight.

FRED CHARLES
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

I'd like to respond to John Gaulke's letter in *Adbusters* #47 about vegetarians and



vegans being anemic and "chewing on ice": I have been a vegetarian for three years now, and I have never been healthier. All my life I suffered from ear infections, a weak immune system and constant bouts with flu and other ailments. Since I cut meat out of my diet, I have been sick about 90 percent less often.

JESSICA GOFORTH
Kenosha, Wisconsin

In my little town of Pacific Grove, we have one chain restaurant. McDonald's weaseled its way into our town before our city council passed an ordinance forbidding fast-food restaurants.

My plan to get rid of the Golden Arches of Doom is to boycott until the CEOs decide to close our branch down.

I've heard that the multibillion-dollar corporation is closing franchises due to low profits. If I can get them out of town they will be out for good.

TRISTAN KADISH
Pacific Grove, California

As a longtime reader, I am agog at the level of commercialism you report in American schools. In Australia, the public school system is tightly controlled, and while private corporations can promote prizes that go to the nominated school of the parents' choice, there are stringent regulations that prevent companies like Apple Computers (for example) from profiteering from such activities. That parents in the US have let this system get so out of hand is a sad indictment of their apathy about the education of their children.

MARK GERRARD
Australia

You guys need to start talking about education, right now. Here's why: the office I've worked in for the past two years is a development office here at New York University. This place is nothing but a sham, devised to make the rich get richer. My office in particular is designed to raise money for a school that doesn't need any more than it has. A school that gobbles up real estate like flies on shit. People call this "philanthropy," but it's just for tax breaks, and it's sickening. I see people pledging \$1 million over five years, just so they can have a floor or room named after them in an unnecessary new building. This is money that could be better used to buy school books for kids in the South Bronx, or start a soup kitchen or housing program. But no.

William Utski, the author of *No More Prisons*, was right: philanthropy is going to be the greatest art form of the 20th century. But not the kind that most colleges and universities practice.

DAVE BUNTING
Brooklyn, New York

After a few issues of *Adbusters*, I decided to quit all fast food and soda. Well, about a week ago I had my first Coca-Cola in a month. I finished the soda, and immediately got sick and spewed out everything I had just consumed. Thanks,

Coke. That sure was refreshing.

SETH DWYER
Melbourne, Florida

My school has one of those exclusive contracts with a big cola company. You'd be really surprised at how many people will just walk away when they see a strategically placed "out of order" sign.

BRANDEN BLACK
By email

It's time for an issue on our nation's normalized and alternative educational institutions. Unschooling, deschooling and the alternative education movements appear to embody many of the themes and critiques presented by *Adbusters*. Our expert-based and corporate-sponsored schooling institutions are the catalyst for us to thrive in the ultimate simulacra. Imagine a school infused with situationist leanings. What would that look like? Where would it be located within societies? What could it change?

KEVIN ARNOLD
Berkeley, California

Being punk is choosing to think for yourself and not blindly following the slogans of the mainstream media. Being punk is always asking intelligent questions and standing behind the truth, regardless of the backlash. Punk is a big "fuck you" to conformity for the sake of conformity. Punk is a big "fuck you" to those who are living in a fantasy world, a world with a bottomless pit of resources, a world with no consequences for those whose first priority is profit.

Punk is not necessarily wearing mohawks and metal spikes on wristbands and belts or having tattered clothes held together by pins. That is fashion, not punk, and that fashion originated 20 years ago. Punk is paving a new path. Punk is having intelligence coupled with courage.

Punk is music, punk is art, punk is politics, punk is style. Punk is thinking freely and being pissed off about anything that stands in the way of that.

BEN DODDS
Salt Lake City, Utah

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ELINOR CARUCCI/NIPPLE HAIR 96

In the fifth grade, there was a bully who called me a “waste of space.” Sure it was meant to be hurtful, but it sounded funny somehow because it kind of rhymed and simply made no sense; a person wasn’t like that old car taking up the front yard. Besides, I was going to be a novelist like Judy Blume or S.E. Hinton.

I’m 32 years old now. I left that small town in the Midwest and moved to Hollywood. I write bad television that does not enlighten the kids but does them harm. My relationships fail one after the other in horrible ugliness. I’ve got insurmountable credit card debt. I’m addicted to everything from booze to prescriptions to the illicit.

ELI
North Hollywood, California

FOR ONE GLORIOUS WEEK IN THE 1960S, MY BUDDIES AND I met with a noseless man every day after school. He sat facing us at a picnic table in Jackson Park, across the street from our school in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood. Because we were fifth grade city boys, who traveled in a pack like stray dogs, we were not afraid of him or much of anything else. The exceptions were the Disciples and the Blackstone Rangers, two warring black gangs on the South Side. The gangs had switchblades and homemade zip guns, and they despised little white boys, who often mimicked their street mannerisms. Our arsenal consisted of water pistols and Popsicle sticks sharpened into dull points on the asphalt sidewalks. We also had magnifying glasses to incinerate ants, and skateboards for quick getaways.

Above all, we had Attitude. We smoked candy cigarettes. We hung baseball cards (only the doubles) with clothespins to our spokes so our Schwinn would rasp like motorcycles. We peeked and giggled at *Playboy* in the back of drug stores, a mysterious stirring beneath our jeans. We sneaked onto elevators ascending to the top floors of the Lake Michigan high rises, then stole up the final flight of stairs to the roofs, where we were kings of the city. The tougher guys in our pack walked around the perimeter of the rooftops balancing on foot-wide ledges, their arms spread out to embrace the world.

The man without a nose had a face that was flat – without geography – and he appeared expressionless. Although he reeked of wine and his clothes were soiled, he seemed content and centered, not at all like a squirmy tribe of non-stop, 10-year-old boys. His calmness reminded me of the Buddhist monks who protested the Vietnam War. There was never any advance warning before the monks appeared on television. Each broadcast began with reports from the dismal war, and it was not unusual to observe a robed monk pour flammable liquid over his shaved head, assume the lotus position, and calmly light a match. I took it all in while reaching for the macaroni and cheese and plenty of catsup on everything.

How I admired them. What discipline! Even when a monk was totally engulfed he never flinched. Sometimes onlookers would valiantly try to douse the (black-and-white) flames, but usually they would let the fire continue until the monk would finally topple over, still cross-legged in the lotus position. At that terrible moment, the monk no longer seemed human. Instead, he resembled a perfect, pyramid-shaped campfire. His smoke drifted across the screen, followed by perhaps a Prell, Fresca or Lucky Strikes commercial.

At that age, there was so much about the world that I was oblivious to, but I did notice that, despite the monks' protests, the war raged on for many more years. Later, I joined classmates in walking out of high school in protest over the never-ending war, but instead of attending the peace rally, I sat in the left field bleachers at Wrigley Field and watched the Cubs and Mets slug it out. If the monks couldn't stop the war, how could I, a 16-year-old undisciplined agnostic with ravaged skin?

The noseless man appalled us at first, but in a big city you see the complete range of human shapes, sizes, colors and malformations. There was never any warning as to when they might cross our paths: legless people rolling around on carts, propelling their bodies down the sidewalks with their hands,

like surfers in search of a wave. Women with elephantiasis, their baggy skin cascading around their ankles. Men so obese that it appeared as if their heads were shrinking. Dwarfs waiting for the bus dressed in three-piece suits, checking their watches and carrying briefcases. It was an unspoken rule never to make fun of these people, because to do so would ensure that we would come down with a similar fate. Already, the afflicted were among us. One older boy, we had heard, had a permanent erection. Another poor soul had lost a testicle. And some classmates simply disappeared after a trip to the hospital, their desks empty for the rest of the school year.

So, although we gawked and stared, the misshapen took on a cult status. We were their groupies. To meet the man without a nose was like meeting Sandy Koufax himself. Our guy lived in the park and even smoked. He blew the smoke out the two brown holes above his mouth, proving that his respiratory system still worked. Soon, the idea of not having a nose was no big deal.

Around that time, a giant moved into our neighborhood, touching off a frenzy of back-alley activity among our gang. We couldn't determine his occupation, but we just knew it had to do with the circus. We had no proof, of course. All we had learned up to that point was contained within a few square blocks, within a handful of comic books and on the backs of baseball cards, and anything we could copy off television and older siblings. No matter, we pursued the tall man relentlessly, from the time he left his apartment until he returned. Our giant, who may have been eight feet tall or six-foot-eight, had to duck beneath the doorframe at Jesselson's Fish Store on 55th Street. We watched him through the window, our gasping, impressible faces pressed to the glass. *Jeez, look at him!* When he finished his business and turned toward us, a white parcel of lake perch in his massive mitts, we fell over each other like a furry ball of puppies trying to scamper down the street. But we were fast and would not stop until we made it all the way back to our secret meeting place at Jackson Park.

No way, he didn't see me!

Yes he did, he saw you Lyons!

Did not!

Did too!

Your mother!

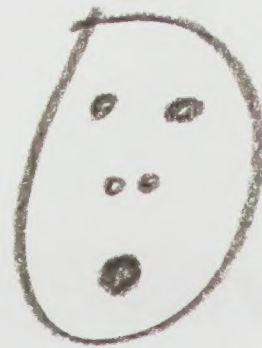
No, your mother!

To insult someone's mother was the ultimate put-down. The insults were tight, declarative sentences that gradually built upon themselves into something approaching bad haiku.

Your mother's a man!

Your mother's a man, lives in Japan!

Your mother's a man, lives in Japan, has rotten teeth, eats soup out of a garbage can!



The conversation would spin in an endless loop until some other adventure popped into our heads.

Let's go to Rasmussen's. He's got baby rat snakes!

Jackson Park was our wilderness. We spent every free moment roaming among its overgrown shrubs and towering trees. Lake Michigan shimmered to the east, just beyond Promontory Point's battery of Nike Hercules missiles. Much later I heard that it was possible that some of those missiles had live nuclear warheads on their tips, and that 200 trees were cut down in Jackson Park to make room for them. *The Chicago American* boasted of the missiles: "A ring of sword-like guided missiles called the Nike—revealed for the first time today—stands ready to send sudden death belting into the sky to meet any enemy head-on."

"The thing you ought to remember is that the Nike's presence hereabouts should enable you to sleep a lot more soundly. They make nice neighbors." My friends and I thought the missiles were impressive. We bought and assembled the Revell model kits of Nikes and Ajaxes.

The world could fall apart for all we cared, as long as the Lake and the Park were safe. Nobody wanted to be stuck inside stuffy, un-air-conditioned apartments. We stalked the bridle path in search of quarters, dimes and nickels that fell from riders' pockets. We kept an eye out for the gangs and we ventured no farther than the racial boundaries that every Chicago resident somehow knew about. We skipped rocks in the goldfish ponds by the Museum of Science and Industry and hatched a plan to someday spend the night after hours in the museum, running wild through the coal mine and farm exhibits.

The most popular game we played was a spirited reenactment of the Civil War. Mark, our pack leader and Rebel general was, in fact, from Tennessee. Because he was a new kid in the neighborhood, and because he was cool, most of us opted to be Rebels, too. We used sticks for guns and lobbed pinecone grenades. (We were not historically accurate in our weaponry.) The highlight of our battles was getting shot and tumbling down the little hillocks in the park, carefully avoiding dog droppings and broken glass. "I've been hit!" we would yell, with drama in our squeaky voices. Then we would lie still for a minute, jump up, and resume the conflict. But you had to pretend to die or someone would scream, "You didn't die! You *have* to die!" I had a crush on Mark. He had been in the world outside Chicago, a place I could not even imagine and, as with the noseless man, I was drawn to Mark with an almost spiritual reverence I usually granted only to the starting lineup of the White Sox.

In our fifth-grade class photo taken in the library, I am dressed in a raggedy pullover that tumbles past my knees and a light shirt underneath with one collar peeking out the top. My teeth are bucked. I've removed my thick glasses, which means I was legally blind and could not even see the photographer. My back is slightly bowed and I'm one of the tallest of the 22 boys in the class. The 11 girls sit with their knees together and their hands in their laps. They appear happier and more mature in their plaid skirts and cardigan sweaters. They always won the spelling bees. They are so goody-goody.

The boys in my class were not so good. We wanted to be tough, feared Chicago South Siders. We wanted to be baseball stars, hockey goalies or Rebel generals. We wanted to own dogs

and private basketball courts that no one else could play on.

We reached no further in our ambitions because we could not envision a world beyond Lake Michigan. Perhaps that's why we had no idea what girls did or what they thought. In a few short years we would be helpless in our pursuit of their affections, and it would not be much fun to play war in the park.

In the school picture, taken in October of 1965, Mark stands next to me, his glasses folded neatly in his front shirt pocket. He set the style for the rest of us, and that day he sported a fashionable black turtleneck beneath his shirt. His freckled face is wise, serene even, like one of those Buddhist monks right before he lit the match. I look, however, like I'm trying to get away with something. I desperately wanted to attain a look of serenity, but I felt like I was going to bust out of my skin, a feeling I had until I was around 30. Six of the boys wear neckties, but no one in my group would dare dress up without suffering verbal abuse and maybe a shove. I often think that the neck-tied boys probably have huge houses and retirement accounts.

Mid-week, the man without a nose told us we were brave warrior men and if we would bring him our milk money on Thursday, he would tell us "the great secret of life" the next day. We dutifully complied and lined up to place in his dirty palm the quarters our moms had given us. (Chocolate milk was 35 cents and few among us received that luxury.) "Thank you, laddie," he said to me. His pleasure made all of us happy, as if all our goofing around was amounting to something.

On Friday we were bursting. The six hours of school seemed like 60. We gave each other knowing glances, passed notes in class, and huddled at recess delirious with excitement. Those outside our clique knew something was afoot, but Mark had sworn us to secrecy with a solemn oath that each of us had to sign. Even the girls watched us with what I interpreted as romantic awe, the same way Lois Lane admired Superman.

I was the first to spot the vacant park bench surrounded by empty wine bottles. We sent out several Rebel scouting parties to scour the park, but the noseless man had vanished. We would never learn The Secret. It did not occur to us that we had been swindled. Besides, it was June, school was about over, and it was time to switch our attention to more important matters: baseball, swimming in the cool lake and endless evenings shooting baskets. Next fall, we would be sixth graders, one step closer to the top of the grade-school pecking order: eighth grade. Already we had heard rumors of what sixth grade would be like. There was health class, with such graphic film strips about certain diseases that one boy had passed out in class, taking his entire desk with him and shaming him for the rest of his public-school life. And there was Mrs. Kopel, whose red hair was wrapped in a painfully tight, red bun that appeared to be on fire. Mrs. Kopel was a teacher so feared that as the first day of school approached that fall, I had bed-wetting nightmares in which she turned winged monkeys loose on me because my homework was late.

Looking back, I'd like to think I know what the man without a nose might have told us. He had, in fact, already delivered his message by his very presence in a public park. It was similar to the monks' message. The secret to life is to be yourself, no matter what.

Stephen Lyons

because some teenagers have "bleak and atrophied familial relationships," companies rush to create emotional relationships with them centered on idealized notions of how their bodies should look and what they should buy. Brands, become surrogate parents.



- > You are doing it all wrong. You need to stand out. You need to be an individual. Your face is all wrong. You need to know the rules. You need to know the secrets. You should try to be yourself. You need to see that change is good. You are fat. You are nothing. One day, you are going to be a star.
- > Lo estás haciendo todo mal. Necesitas destacar. Necesitas tu individualidad. Tu cara está mal. Necesitas saber las reglas. Necesitas conocer los secretos. Deberías tratar de ser tú misma. Necesitas ver que el cambio es bueno. Estás gorda. No eres nada. Un día, serás una estrella.
- > C'est pas comme ça qu'y faut faire. Faut t'affirmer. Te distinguer. Ta tête, c'est pas ça. Faut connaître les règles. les secrets. Faut que t'essaies d'être toi-même. Tu devrais te rendre compte que le changement fait du bien. T'es grosse. T'es pas grand chose. Un jour tu seras une star.



MaxMara
OCCASIONAL

Cool used to be a form of social deviance and rebellion, but now it is the dominant ethic of consumer capitalism.

MASTER RACE

A full-page photograph of a woman with long brown hair, smiling, wearing a red dress and carrying a baby in a red carrier. The background is dark and out of focus.

It's innovation and creativity that distinguish American products, be it rap or a Starbucks coffee cup. The huge rewards awaiting a good idea are unparalleled in the world, and the result is new and titillating products and ideas. The adoption of American innovations by nations that are otherwise unfriendly to the US is nothing less than a tribute to human creativity pushed to its limits.

MAHMOUD BADREDDINE
London, Ontario

La innovación y la creatividad distinguen a los productos americanos, se trate del "rap" o de una taza de café de Starbucks. Las enormes recompensas de una buena idea no tienen paralelo en el mundo, y los resultados son nuevos y estimulantes productos e ideas. La adopción de las innovaciones americanas por parte de naciones que en otro momento serían poco amigables con Estados Unidos no es sino un tributo a los límites de la creatividad humana

C'est leur côté particulièrement créateur et innovateur qui différencie les produits américains, que ce soit le rap ou le café Starbucks. Il n'y a rien de plus gratifiant au monde qu'une bonne idée avec comme résultat des produits et des idées nouveaux et invitants. Que des nations par ailleurs pas très chaudes envers les US adoptent leurs nouveautés n'est rien moins qu'un hommage à l'extrême créativité de l'homme.

Why is the world in awe of American cool? Because, unfortunately, it works. Watch generic television for an hour or so. Eventually, you will feel at ease – if you don't know any better. Why create your own culture, when others have already packaged and shipped a culture for you? It reminds me of something my grandmother once said to me after I drove her car. She said: "Don't you feel important driving a nice, expensive car?" No grandma, I don't.

FRANCO VITELLA
*Shelby Township,
Michigan*

In a nutshell, America is vacuum-packed sin. Everything about our way of life is viewed as sinful by the rest of the world. Whether it be our entertainment or our fashion trends, we Americans are constantly pissing off Allah, the Buddha and a host of other powerful deities. And I don't know about you, but growing up, anything seen as sinful by my parents and elders was all the more appealing. America is the forbidden fruit of the world.

JAMES RATLIFF
Greenwood, Indiana

As a teenager, I used to insist that my mom purchase my clothes from the army and navy surplus store. She thought I was crazy, but it was the only store that had basic t-shirts with no logos and jeans with no labels other than the old-fashioned Levi Strauss leather stamp on the back. If I could have bought unmarked jeans, I would have.

Where I went to high school, all the kids started wearing alligator-logo shirts.



I thought they looked silly. A 100 percent cotton shirt with an alligator sewed on to it? Why? But then I thought, maybe it's just fun. So, I went to a shopping mall to purchase one and found the price to be extraordinarily high. I normally paid around \$5 for a t-shirt; they wanted \$35 for an alligator shirt? Being a kid, I was perplexed. All the students who wore the alligator shirts seemed well groomed. They had cars. They were on the football team or played some other popular sport. And they seemed to have little regard for money. To be able to afford the many different colors of alligator shirt on offer, I assumed that they had to be wealthy.

One day I got tired of feeling left out.

I went to the store and bought a gray alligator shirt. I took it straight home and put it on. I looked in the mirror and realized that this was not me. I grabbed a pair of scissors, pulled the alligator away from my chest and cut it out of the shirt. I looked back into the mirror and smiled.

The next day I went to school with my brand new alligator shirt. The kids were laughing and poking fun; I ignored their stupid sarcasm. That was a memorable day for me.

Now I'm older. I still see people wearing the alligator shirts; I also see people wearing the polo-player shirts. The plain t-shirts I buy still cost about \$5 each. I've priced the polo shirts, and they seem to ring in at around \$70 apiece. I'm sure it's just me, but I can't see the additional value. I suppose if my self-esteem were very low and I wanted to provide an illusion of wealth, I might go to those extremes. But I'm perfectly happy with having real wealth in the

form of cash, not clothing, and power in the form of knowledge, not vanity.

JERRY FRAZIER
Long Beach, California

I just moved to a new city. A new friend took me for a ride around town in his Volkswagen Jetta. He played some good tunes, but I wanted to see if they were charting on Billboard before I formed an opinion. I stuck my head out of the window, and at that point I realized that something was almost too real. My life was a car commercial.

JORDON CHEUNG
Kelowna, British Columbia

CULTURAL REVOLUTION IS OUR BUSINESS

We are a loose global network of artists, writers, environmentalists, ecological economists, media-literacy teachers, reborn Lefties, ecofeminists, downshifters, high school shit-disturbers, campus rabble-rousers, incorrigibles, malcontents and green entrepreneurs. We are idealists, anarchists, guerrilla tacticians, pranksters, neo-Luddites, poets, philosophers and punks. Our aim is to topple existing power structures and forge a major rethinking of the way we will live in the 21st century. We want to change the way information flows, the way institutions wield power, the way the world keeps the peace, the way the food, fashion, automobile, sports, music and culture industries set their agendas. Above all, we want to change the way we interact with the mass media and the way in which meaning is produced in our society.

LA REVOLUCION CULTURAL ES NUESTRO NEGOCIO

Somos una libre y relajada red global de artistas, escritores, ambientalistas, economistas ecológicos, estudiosos de la comunicación, izquierdistas renacidos, eco-feministas, minimalistas, desmadrosos de preparatoria, creadores de polémica universitaria, incorregibles, inconformistas y emprendedores verdes. Somos idealistas, anarquistas, tácticos de guerrilla, bromistas, neo-ludistas, poetas, filósofos y punks. Nuestro objetivo es derribar las estructuras de poder existentes y fraguar una profunda reflexión sobre la manera en que viviremos en el Siglo XXI. Queremos cambiar el flujo de la información, el modo en que las instituciones ejercen su poder, la forma en que el mundo mantiene la paz, la manera en que las industrias de la comida, la moda, los automóviles, los deportes, la música y la cultura fijan sus planes. Sobre todo, queremos cambiar la forma en que interactuamos con los medios masivos de comunicación y la manera en que el contenido y el significado son producidos en nuestra sociedad.

NOTRE AFFAIRE, C'EST LA RÉVOLUTION CULTURELLE

Nous sommes un réseau libre d'artistes, d'écrivains, d'écologistes, d'écolo-économistes, d'enseignants de la culture médiatique, de gens de la nouvelle gauche, d'écoféministes, de partisans d'une vie moins matérialiste, de semeurs de caca du secondaire, d'agitateurs universitaires, d'incorrigibles, d'insatisfaits et d'entrepreneurs verts. Nous sommes des idéalistes, des anarchistes, des stratèges de guérilla, des farceurs, des nouveaux Luddites, des poètes, des philosophes et des punks. Nous visons à faire basculer les structures de pouvoir existantes et à forger dans son entier un penser et un vivre du 21ème siècle. Nous voulons changer le trajet de l'information, l'exercice du pouvoir dans les institutions, la façon de faire régner la paix dans le monde, la manière dont les industries programment l'alimentation, la mode, l'automobile, les sports, la musique et la culture. Et pardessus tout, nous voulons changer notre relation avec les médias ainsi que la façon dont la signification se crée dans notre société.

FIND OUT MORE

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IN A 1999 MOVE TO LAUNCH THE REMOTE Buddhist kingdom of Bhutan into the global age – and increase Gross National Happiness among his people – the new Dragon King lifted the ban on television, setting off a pandemic of 24-hour canned entertainment.

In no time, five satellite dishes owned by local distributor Sigma Cable sprang up in a vegetable patch outside Thimphu, the capital city. Meanwhile, some 30 other smaller companies continue to rally for market share. For about five bucks a month, folks in Bhutan can now fill their Himalayan homes with *Larry King Live*, *American Idol* and a steady stream of ads for Mercedes Benz.

Yet in a society where there is still no word for traffic jam in *dzongkha*, the Bhutanese language, the mass clicking of remotes may be triggering a virtual culture shock.

Sangay Ngedup, minister for health and education, recently told the *Guardian* newspaper that television is raising questions about the chasm between the old ways of life and the TV reality of MTV and CNN. "Until recently, we shied away from killing insects, and yet now we Bhutanese are asked to watch people on TV blowing heads off with shotguns. Will we now be blowing each other's heads off?"

It's not an idle worry. In the last year alone, communities have been rocked by a wave of unusual crimes: a truck driver and heroin addict bludgeoned his wife to death; a drunk farmer drove his in-laws off a cliff; and 18 boys were arrested for breaking into houses to steal foreign currency and a 12-inch TV set. An official recently told the press that a village lost an entire crop because farmers spent too much time glued to daytime television. Children are refusing to wear their traditional *ghos*, opting instead for t-shirts bearing US wrestling logos and Stars and Stripes bandannas on their heads. Girls want Britney Spears smiles and whiter, more American complexions. Even parents admit to wanting to watch TV more than they want to spend time with their kids, half of whom are stuck in front of the tube for up to 12 hours a day.

But can TV be blamed for the clearcut of spiritual values, degeneracy and violence? Are Bhutan's symptoms nothing more than the price of progress – or even a rebellion against restrictive social customs? Or have Bhutan's leaders, like many in the West, underestimated the lethality of television and failed to protect its citizens?

Aaron Goodman

FOR THE MOST PART, THE Federal Communications Commission's recent loosening of media-ownership rules in America was predictable. George "Bring 'Em On" Bush had softened us all up for it with his administration's denial of climate change, illegal invasions of sovereign countries and unabashed championing of the rich and the powerful. Wasn't it about time for a handout to the corporate media complex?

Media scholar Robert McChesney was among those less than astonished to watch FCC chair Michael K. Powell and his fellow Republican commissioners defeat Democratic opposition to the rule changes in a 3-2 vote. The decision opens the door to monopoly within America's already concentrated media system. Who but a weak-kneed liberal wouldn't want Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation to own three TV stations, eight radio stations, a newspaper and a cable system in a single city?

"Having corporate commercial media is a crucial part of the US global vision for the world," says McChesney, a professor of communications at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. It's a vision in which a small nonprofit, noncommercial sector is overwhelmed by the total domination of media corporations, under the belief that a commercial media will produce coverage and culture sympathetic to broader commercial interests.

Yes, it's greed, said McChesney. But the correct word is really corruption. "That's the accurate term to describe what the FCC has done. Exceptional corruption. World-class, major-league, in-your-face corruption." Democratic Senator Byron Dorgan is



FCC CHAIR MICHAEL K. POWELL – SON OF COLIN – CAST THE DECIDING VOTE FOR MEGA-MEGAMEDIA ON JUNE 2, 2003.

equally pissed. At a Washington press conference held the day after the June 2 vote, he called the changes "dumb and dangerous" and "the fastest, most complete cave-in to corporate interests I've ever seen by what is supposed to be a federal regulatory agency."

Embarrassingly for Michael Powell – who argues that keeping a cap on media ownership would spell the end of free network TV – his organization is wide open to charges of corruption. Powell knows all about freebies. According to the Washington-based Center for Public Integrity, FCC officials have accepted some 2,500 trips to cities such as Las Vegas and New Orleans from the telecommunications and broadcasting industries. Not only that, the commission partly bases its deregulation plans on data generated by the companies it's supposed to be policing.

Nothing shocking about that in America today. But here's a surprise: the unprecedented public outcry. Leading up to June 2, about 750,000 people flooded the FCC with comments, and some 300,000 later contacted Congress. The commission formally issued its new rules on July 2, setting in motion what at press time

looked to be a fierce legal battle on Capitol Hill. According to the *Washington Post*, Senator Dorgan threatened to invoke the Congressional Review Act, an obscure and little-used piece of legislation that lets Congress toss out the edicts of agencies like the FCC.

McChesney is encouraged to see a democratic uprising against the FCC – an unelected body with the power to decide what ordinary Americans see, read and hear. "That's the revolutionary change we're in the midst of right now," he says, acknowledging that the movement is still in its early days. "It's like the Civil Rights movement in 1951. It's not 1963, it's 1951. But it's not 1896, either. We've come a long way in the last year."

Nick Rockel and Paul Schmelzer

On June 30, the highest appeals court in the US decided that editors of one of the few remaining DIY media outlets – web logs, or blogs – can't be held responsible for libel for information they post. For a medium that, to borrow from Marx's lexicon, seizes the means of information production, such protection will keep a small portion of the internet relatively free from corporate oversight. A 2001 study by Jupiter Media Metrix showed that there's not much independence left on the net: 14 companies controlled 60 percent of online users' time, down from 110 companies in 1999.

IN ITALY, THREE OF THE FOUR MAIN PRIVATE TV CHANNELS are controlled by one man, who also happens to be the country's prime minister. Some, in fact, suggest that's how Silvio Berlusconi got to be prime minister. During the 2001 national elections, his Mediaset TV channels put Berlusconi's image on their screens almost twice as much as his center-left rival (1,427 minutes versus 887).

While Italy may be the obvious example of what can happen when too much media is in the hands of too few people, it's only one of many countries debating how – or whether – to control media ownership. The United States, Britain and Australia have all been under intense corporate pressure of late to loosen existing rules designed to prevent media companies from monopolizing major markets. The US Federal Communications Commission has already bowed to those pressures.

In Canada, regulators didn't have to buckle – the country already has some of the world's most lenient media ownership rules. That makes Canada a canary in the mine shaft for global media deregulation.

Generations of swashbuckling international media barons – Lord Beaverbrook, Lord Thomson and most recently, the blustering, egomaniacal Lord Conrad Black – got their starts in the northern nation. Since the 1970s, in spite of much hand-wringing and issuing of royal commissions, little has been done about Canada's lack of media competition. Which is why, on July 31, 2000, CanWest Global Communications Inc. was able to buy virtually all of Conrad Black's Canadian newspaper assets and instantly transform itself from a Winnipeg-based private



MEDIA MOGUL LEONARD ASPER (LEFT) AND FATHER ISRAEL 'IZZY' ASPER ARE A GLOBAL WARNING AGAINST NATIONAL MEDIA MONOPOLIES.

television network – whose chief claim to fame was a knack for knowing which US sitcoms would attract audiences – into the most influential media company in the country.

CanWest's assets suddenly ballooned to include not only Global Television, the country's second largest private TV network, which reaches more than 90 percent of Canadian households; but also the *National Post*, one of just two national newspapers; 14 metropolitan dailies in every major city except Toronto and Winnipeg; 126 smaller papers from coast to coast; Canada.com, Canada's third most popular Internet portal; and a raft of specialty cable TV channels and production companies.

In many communities, CanWest Global is now the only media game in town.

CanWest is controlled by the Aspers, a powerful, politically connected Winnipeg family. Their personal agenda is now the shared obsession of all its media outlets: unquestioning support for Israel; forceful opposition to the Palestinian cause; blind loyalty to Canada's governing Liberal party; mindless enthusiasm for their own television network; uncompromising opposition to the continued existence of Canada's public broadcaster; and blatant cheerleading for globalization.

After three years of CanWest's oppressive hand to the throats of its nationwide slate of editors, columnists and reporters, Canadians know well the havoc media cross-ownership and concentration can wreak on the most basic notions of a free, unfettered press.

Reporters have had news stories rewritten to toe the company line and been suspended or threatened with dismissal when they objected. Columnists' "wrong" opinions have been edited or eliminated, and at least a dozen have quit or been fired (I was one of the quitters). Even the usually complacent publisher of the *Ottawa Citizen*, one of the chain's largest and most successful dailies, was fired after permitting a column critical of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien to be published in the paper.

In spite of public protests, CanWest continues to tighten the editorial noose. It recently opened a centralized news desk in Winnipeg with an internet-based datebook system to allow editors in Winnipeg to track every reporter on every assignment in every CanWest paper, while "bat" phones provide Winnipeg with direct entry into every newsroom in the chain. At some point, the news desk is expected to begin providing its homogenized hodge-podge of news, features and opinions to the chain's TV and Internet outlets, too.

Although a parliamentary committee recently expressed alarm at Canada's media mayhem and called on the government to "issue a clear and unequivocal policy statement" by July 2004, no one is holding their breath. The Aspers have too many friends in high places.

Ironically, the best – and maybe only – hope for Canadian citizens now is that the free market may eventually do what governments won't. To acquire Conrad Black's media empire, CanWest took on a staggering \$4-billion debt that has already forced it to sell off some newspapers. But giving free rein to the market is no answer. It's what got Canada's media into this mess in the first place – which should be a lesson to those countries still searching for that elusive ideal, a truly free press.

Stephen Kimber



IMAGINE YOU'RE NOBODY. YOU USED to be somebody, except you're too tired to remember who that person is. What you do know: you're being held against your will, without access to a phone, a computer or a lawyer. Your captors haven't charged you with anything, but all hours of the day and night they remind you of your complicity in horrible crimes. And they want answers: names, dates, addresses, the inner workings of plots to destroy the Free World. You're America's Most Hated, as the TV would make plain if you were allowed to watch it and see yourself stapled into your orange jumpsuit at the nascent death camp of Guantánamo Bay.

Just because you're nobody doesn't mean you're not important.

Now, imagine that the casually uniformed man asking the questions is at once your bitterest enemy and your only friend. And understand that although he's angry about the things he says you and your supposed international network of terrorist pals have done to his country, he's never raised a hand against you.

Quite the contrary. He comes and chats with you softly during the breaks from your regimen of acute and soul-splintering discomfort. A sleepless, klieg-lit night here. A skipped dinner there. A wordless afternoon squatting blindfolded in the yard with your fellow prisoners, legs crossed just so beneath your buttocks, under the supervision of soldiers who would gladly beat you senseless.

And finally – eternally, if you're feeling uncooperative – imagine that you and your kind interrogator have all the time in the world to get to know each other; mostly, for him to get to know you. A straight shooter who targets your confidence with

direct lines of questioning, he promises that life will get better after you've confessed. You actually look forward to the predictability of those irregular meetings in your chicken coop. Soon you'll stop telling him what you think he wants to hear. You'll tell him what he needs to hear.

This is how the US government does torture today. But don't call it that. In late June, senior Pentagon lawyer William Haynes sent a letter to Congress, responding to allegations that American interrogators were using sleep deprivation and other "stress and duress" techniques on prisoners.

The letter stated that the Bush Administration will not use torture – defined in part by the UN as "any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as

obtaining from him or a third person information or a 'confession'" – as a weapon in the so-called war on terror. Never mind that according to Holly Burkhalter, a US director of Physicians for Human Rights, the Pentagon doesn't have a clear policy ruling out torture.

The Haynes pledge came long after the White House had gauged the post-September 11 mood and found widespread acceptance of torture as a means of breaking down al-Qaeda suspects. "The gloves are off," a senior CIA official told the *Washington Post* in October 2001, echoing the thoughts of many ordinary Americans. "The president has given the agency the green light to do whatever is necessary." Around the same time, high-profile law professor Alan Dershowitz raised the possibility of the US administering "nonlethal torture" in violation of the Geneva Conventions, but only if done "with accountability and openly."

Deliberately or not, Washington has keyed into the sympathy of a public whose image of torture is a thrashing Rambo strapped to an electrified bed frame. When cartoonishly brutal methods like that acquire a sheen of propriety, who's going to have a problem with Khalid Shaikh Mohammed and his enemy-combatant brethren undergoing a little sensory bombardment or not getting instant treatment for their shrapnel wounds?

Ironically, some pundits call these practices "torture lite," as if they're a newfangled form of punishment. But as the Nazis and the Soviets knew, the rack and the thumbscrew are for amateurs unskilled in the art of psychological manipulation. The gruesome pre-industrial tortures described in Michel Foucault's 1975 book *Discipline and Punish* seldom extracted the truth from their victims. For decades, the best interrogators have disguised their sticks as carrots and gone straight for the gray matter. The body may remember, but the brain is where it's at.

Nick Rockel



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COVER PHOTO: Stacy Greene *Gwen* 1993

ME*INDEX

The world's most damaged megabrand – McDonald's – can't shake its rep as Brand America's bandleader. The divide is clear: America loves McD's; the rest of the planet doesn't. In May, with the world still pissed about Gulf War II, McDonald's sales were up by over six percent in the US... but down almost as much across Asia and Africa, and down heavily in Europe as well. The Index is feeling good, skips the freedom fries.

Better news for the Golden Arches: a papal blessing. Early in May, Mickie D's sponsored the visit of Pope John Paul II to Spain, vouchers for its products miraculously appearing in a bible-and-a-burger "pilgrim's bag" being sold to the faithful. All this from a pope who regularly speaks out against "unfettered capitalism." The Index loses its lunch.

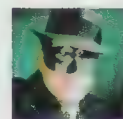
Following a study by Canadian and Australian researchers, the drug olanzapine (a.k.a. Zyprexa, the Eli Lilly pill originally used to treat schizophrenia) is set to be prescribed for anorexia nervosa, the disorder marked by self-starvation and extreme fear of getting fat. The drug may calm the phobia, and a common side effect is weight gain. Of course, other potential side effects – an increased risk of suicide and akathisia, an intense inner anxiety – might be a greater concern. And then there are the drug's unknown effects on the growing brains of anorexia's mostly young, mostly female sufferers. The Index chews, but refuses to swallow.

New to the M.E. glossary: "rocketing," or bumping up your level of public cool by spending big for a few prized consumer goods (e.g. car, house) and chintzing on the small stuff. The Index cancels its prescriptions, buys a protest billboard in Manhattan.



Speaking of rocketing, No. 1 NBA draft pick LeBron James has signed a sky-high \$90-million endorsement deal to wear the Nike swoosh. That makes him the highest-profile supporter of sweatshop labor since His Airness Michael Jordan. The mainstream media's

take on LeBron's lack of social conscience? Don't pressure the kid, he's only 18. Tell it to the kids in the Nike shoe factories.



And speaking of pimping product, the Miramax corporation plans to make a car the first star of its 2005 film *The Green Hornet*. In exchange for more than \$35 million in promotional funds, one lucky vehicle will find itself written into the as-yet-nonexistent screenplay. The Index discovers it is running out of gas.

But really, cars are so yesterday. California-based TransOrbital has space available in its logo-spattered TrailBlazer lunar orbiter, and it's willing – for cash – to carry clients' personal effects, including cremation ashes, to the moon, where the orbiter is expected to crash in October. It's one great leap for marketing, one giant step backwards for basic human dignity. The Index starts the countdown.

America's view of perfection continues to shrink, narrow and mutate. New focus: the bellybutton. Umbilicoplasty, a procedure that tones and tightens those embarrassing "loose" bellybuttons, is becoming a popular accent for many of the 83,000 Americans who have tummy tucks each year. The Index does some navel-gazing, likes what it sees, eats a healthy lunch.



Harder to digest is the so-called Center for Consumer Freedom, which recently placed a 30-second ad on CNN, Fox and other channels to attack the rise of lawsuits against those food companies that knowingly obscure the low dietary value of their products. In case you couldn't guess, the CCF is supported by restaurants, food companies... oh, and probably even a few consumers. So which corporations are footing the hefty PR tab for this bogus grassroots group? "Many of the companies and individuals who support the Center financially have indicated that they want anonymity as a contributor." Of course they do. The Index loves a food fight.

* Mental Environment



slege mentality

In the first months of fighting in the former Yugoslavia, the people avoided the use of the word "war." There was some killing, yes, some bombing, but not a war. Surely not a war. Everyday life continued; in fact, everyday life was more noticeable than ever. Croatians drank espresso and cappuccino, and realized suddenly that this made them different from the enemy Serbs, who preferred Turkish coffee. It became essential to drink espresso and cappuccino, to fill the cafés each time a crisis had passed. With every disruption, the attempt to return to normality became more pronounced and more dissonant: a family puts up new wallpaper in a home they will be forced to abandon; men discuss handguns as though they were comparing big-screen TVs; a teenage refugee searches alleys for a pair of high-heel shoes. It's a form of cultural homeostasis, the tendency of systems to return to equilibrium. But maintain the disruption – too many air raids, too many orange alerts – and "normal" becomes something that has to be forced. Normal becomes hyper-normal. Life becomes *aggressively normal*.



My elementary school was in a small town in the prairies. It was 1984. Wind blew through the wheat fields. Down the hallways, across the playground, there walked an avatar of cool. His name was Kenton and his style accessory was violence. You could tell he was cool by the way he sauntered, by the rough-cut jeans and feathered blonde hair, and by the two thugs – age: 11; pants: husky – who followed his commands. Kenton was cool because he didn't care what teachers said. I saw the vice-principal once lift him by his shirt and slam him against a locker. Afterward, Kenton smirked all the way to the principal's office. By the end of the day everyone knew what had happened, and we were impressed. Kenton always won.

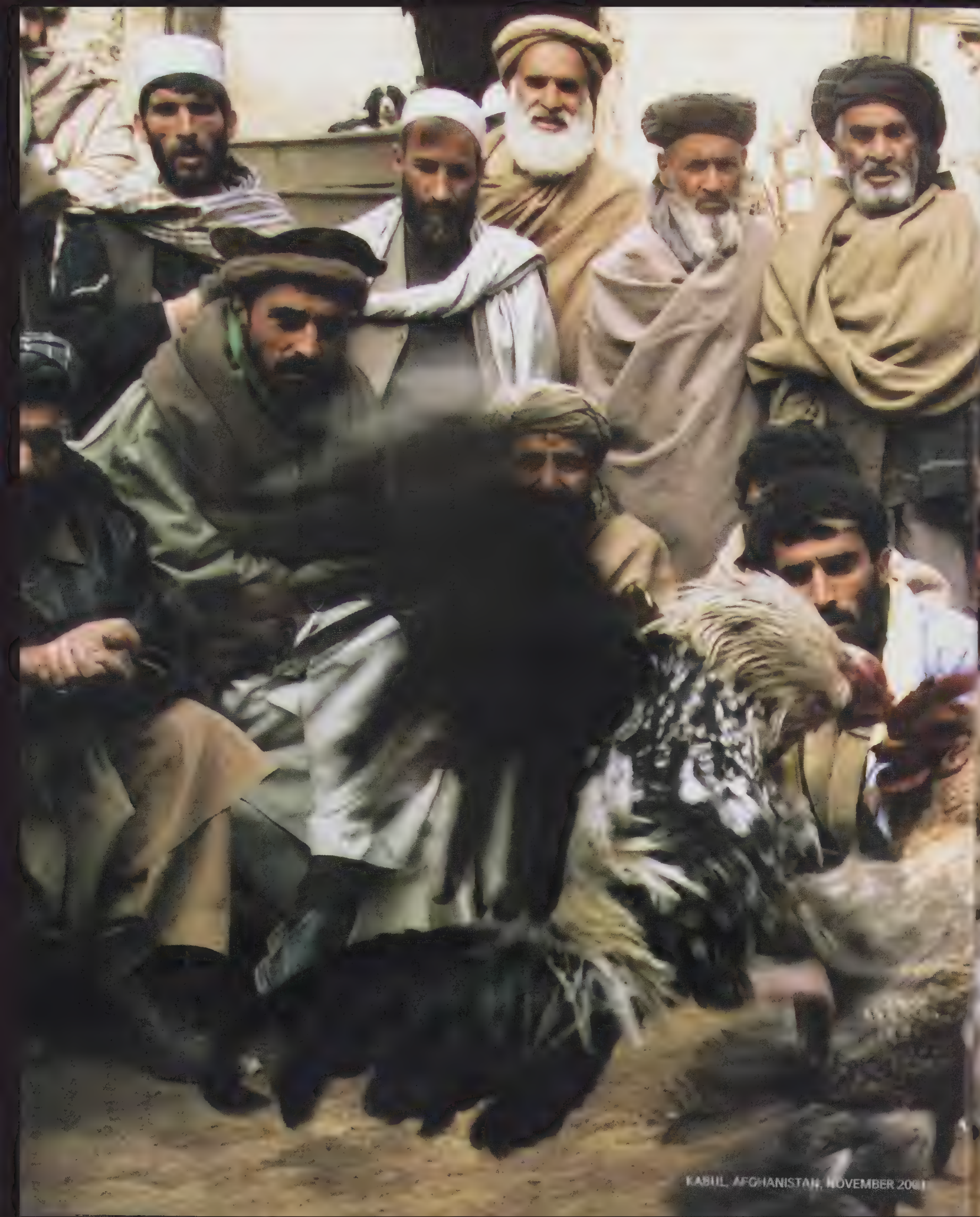
In the beginning, the cool person is the one who can intimidate. He might beat you up, but usually he'll let someone else do it for him. The cool girl creates playground alliances and rites of initiation; she is able to grant you her much-valued attention or isolate you, grind away at your self-esteem and friendships.

They are unpredictable and unlawful. It is inconceivable that they could be dethroned. They are cool, and they wield it like a whip.

Kris Johansen

The risk that you will die from a terrorist attack is, on average, bundled in with such hazards as bee stings and lightning. There would need to be an attack with the magnitude of September 11 every second month just to keep up with the murder rate, and more than monthly to compare with auto accident fatalities. Other dangers might be higher on our minds as well, like the fact that, in June, America suffered its worst single month of tornadoes on record – a widely predicted outcome of global climate change. Some people feel a sense of urgency about these ongoing crises; we know those people as “paranoids.” Then there are those who promote a perpetual fear of the invisible, unpredictable and largely unstoppable threat of terrorism. Those are the people that we call “patriots.”





KABUL, AFGHANISTAN, NOVEMBER 2001



> You don't have enough money. You are not keeping pace. You
> need to work harder. Your face is all wrong. You have no style.
> You are lagging behind. You need more things. You are one step
> behind the rest.

> No tienes suficiente dinero. No estás teniendo el paso. Tienes que
> trabajar más fuerte. Tu cara está mal.
> No tienes estilo. Te estás quedando atrás. Necesitas más cosas.
> Estás un paso atrás de todos los demás.

> T'es pas assez d'argent. Tu te laisses dépasser.
> Tu es basket plus. T'es pas la tête qui faut. T'es pas d'allure.
> T'es en train de te laisser dépasser. Tu as besoin de plus de trucs. T'es en retard.
> D'argent tu n'en as pas.



George W. Bush watched the twin towers come down and then he issued his command to "get about the business of America." Rudy Giuliani, mayor of New York, called on the powers of "the best shoppers in the world." The mayor of Miami declared that "it has never been more patriotic to go shopping." It all sounded so crass. But who couldn't see that ordinary life was no longer guaranteed? Retreat from the malls and the home front was lost. The economy would implode; the enemy would win. In normal times, consumer culture seems slightly unreal. At best, we think of it as a symbol of opportunity and quality of life; at worst, as a mirage, an endless distraction. But it is more than all of that. It is a structure. It is more than a structure – it is a *system of order*.

TO: EDITORS, ADBUSTERS MEDIA FOUNDATION
FROM: PETER BELMONTE
DATE: JULY 11, 2003
MEMO: "BRAND COOL"

According to the marketing studies, our "aspirational age" is 17 years old. It's the age of Perfect Cool and everybody wants it, from 42-year-old "style fossils" to 30-something "adultescents" to eight-year-old "tartlets" who wear glitter denims and kick box to S Club Juniors. You're thinking marketing? Think sweet 17.

As much as the importance of being cool is discounted, it remains a timeless emotional need. Cool is a comprehensive set of life-guiding concepts, a shorthand for social survival: acceptance, popularity, fun and success. Don't take that as a definition, though. Cool has no definition. In fact, its total undefinability is what has made "Am I cool?" the all-consuming question of our times.

By the 1990s, the brandmasters had begun to study teens like an anthropologist would study a foreign culture. At the same time, branding was up against its deepest challenge yet. The so-called Generation X was in active self-defense against the marketers, adopting a posture and lifestyle that resisted the very notion of cool itself. Of course, they turned out to be a market ripe for harvest. It only took the right kind of message, and Sprite nailed it with their 1995 reverse-marketing play. "Image is Nothing, Thirst is Everything," the Sprite campaign proclaimed. You remember: famous basketball players pitching the product in TV ads while bags of money representing their endorsement fees accumulated at the bottom of the screen. Anti-sell became the new sell; marketing moved from one play to the next.

Today's youth market is the most ethnically mingled bunch in history. Teenagers are empowered by their differences and many pride themselves on their ability to move between peer groups and make friends across increasingly blurry racial lines. Polyethnic plays were deployed and planted, most memorably by Gap, Hilfiger and Benetton. Their ads are a tangle of multiculturalism: scrubbed black faces lounging with their wind-swept white brothers in that great country club in the sky. Is it art imitating life or life imitating art? Actually, it's what sociologists call "reflexivity" – the tendency of communications to shape society. (Reports on increasing divorce rates tend to increase divorce rates; opinion polls about voter trends tend to affect the way people cast their votes.) Through reflexivity, the communications industry feeds into the streams that form cultural agendas; the media show us how we could or should be living.

Over the past decade, young black men in American inner cities have been the most aggressively mined by the brandmasters as a source of borrowed meaning and identity. For pioneers, think Nike and Hilfiger, both catapulted to brand superstardom in no small part by poor kids incorporating their brands into hip-hop style at the very moment when rap was being thrust into the limelight. The turning point for Tommy Hil was a single night in March 1994, when Tommy's nephew introduced the label to friends at Def Jam records and to rapper icon Snoop Doggy Dogg. Snoop swaggered on to the *Saturday Night Live* stage dressed in baggy gangsta pants, but also draped in a preppie sport jersey branded boldly with the Hilfiger logo. Hilfiger sales exploded – up \$93 million the next year. As for Nike – the company is so focused on borrowing style and attitude from black urban youth that its marketers have their own word for the practice: "bro-ing."

But where is cool going next? What product or brand will ride high on the next wave of cool? Here's the only answer: the one that moves at the speed of reinvention.

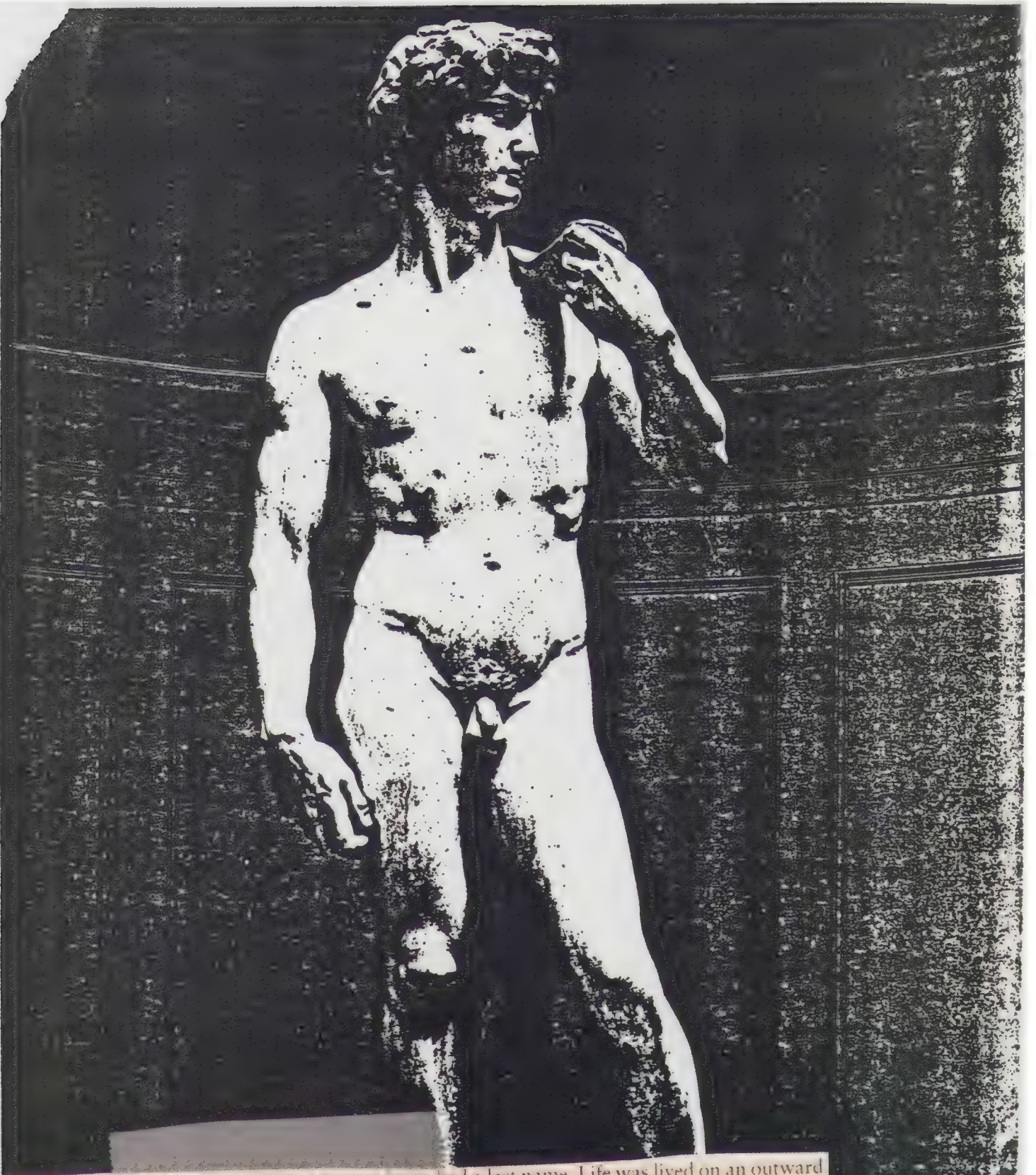
A few facts to keep in mind. Number one: the whole skate/hip-hop thing is now so unbelievably commercial and mainstream that many style hoovers have completely lost interest. The post-streetwear age is looming ever-closer.

Number two: there is a contemporary groundswell of cultural apathy towards hyped lifestyles and impossible beauty. It's not for nothing that marketing execs are studying *No Logo*. A bit of truth and authenticity? A great new play.

An extension of the truth construct is the re-birth of "un-cool." Getting it wrong may now be the safest, surest way of being one step ahead. Naturally, it's nothing new. As a route to instant cred, adopting a faux pas and making it work for you has become so obvious that everyone is doing it. What was once a means of *rejecting* fashion is now an attempt to *preempt* fashion.

The growing universality of un-cool/nu-cool is more than a new twist on irony. It's also a nostalgia for the carefree days before teens fell victim to their own hyper self-consciousness. Following years of logomania, fashion is experiencing a backlash against the brand. In the same way, so-called tastemakers are abandoning *Wallpaper*-clone bars in favor of the local pub. And yes, brandmasters are onto the game. Referencing a world previously overlooked or considered unsavory has become a new way of asserting independence and individuality. It's been good news for the revived fortunes of Camper shoes, Pringle cashmere, rainbow leg warmers and Babycham. In six months' time they'll be sporting Millets fleeces and Widdecombe bowl cuts while discussing the merits of *White People* and the Lighthouse Family. Then it won't be long before anti-anti-cool. The cycle goes 'round. Be ready.





For tens of thousands of years, no ordinary human being had a last name. Life was lived on an outward trajectory, toward family and community, country and king, temple and god. Beyond the boundaries of the village or the city-state, the human being was an animal – often the predator, but often enough the prey. The oceans were boundless and terrifying. The sky inhaled the spirit. Then came the Renaissance, and with it the eruption of humanist insight and self-consciousness. In a flicker of geological time, god and nature were dead. The individual stood at the center of the universe.



Just how confused we are over what we mean by individualism can most easily be seen by looking at the West from the outside. Buddhist societies are horrified by a great deal in the West, but the element which horrifies them most is our obsession with ourselves as a subject of unending interest. By their standards nothing could be unhealthier than a guilt-ridden, self-obsessed, proselytizing white male or female, selling God or democracy or liberalism or capitalism with insistent superior modesty. It is clear to the Buddhist that this individual understands neither herself nor his place. He is ill at ease in his role; mal dans sa peau: a hypocrite taking out her frustrations on the world.

As for the contemporary liberated Westerner, who thinks himself relaxed, friendly, open, in tune with himself and eager to be in tune with others — he comes across as even more revolting. He suffers from the same confused superiority as his guilt-ridden predecessor but has further confused himself by pretending that he doesn't feel superior. While the Westerner does not see or consciously understand this, the outsider sees it immediately.

— John Ralston Saul
Voltaire's Bastards

1940s

1950s

1960s

Western style

Zazous

Zooti



Rockabillys

Teddy Boys

Surfers

Hippie

Psychedelics

Swinging London

Mods

Rockers

fee-bar
cowboys +
Ton-up boys

Bikers

La Dolce Vita

Rude Boys

Caribbean
style

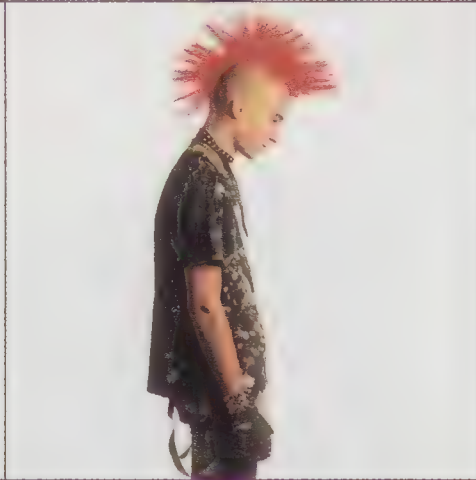
1970s

1980s

1990s



The
really cool
people avoided
all this





Traditional societies ascribe identity on the basis of ethnic and tribal traditions, modern societies on the basis of the sovereign state and the market economy. The post-modern world will discover that the true basis of our identity is our membership in a species interconnected with all other species — a foundation far more universal than race, gender, ethnicity or anything partial and restricted. To evolve creatively, humans need to have a sense of belonging that unites them with all other humans and their natural habitats. This is the deeper sense of spirituality that I believe will inform the search for identity conducted by the next generation.



Confidence of creating deliciousness.

HERE'S A REALLY WEIRD FACT: AFFLUENT BRITISH 15-YEAR-old girls are now twice as prone to anxiety and depression as their poorer neighbors. These girls have every possible advantage. They do much better at school than boys. Hard-won freedoms denied to their mothers and grandmothers mean they have much more money to spend and choice about how to use their time. If any group is feeling pretty chipper about life under American-style advanced capitalism, it should be them.

Yet they are increasingly miserable. Whereas in 1987 only six percent suffered from a serious mental illness, now it's 18 percent. The cause of this derangement is the same as the one that has led to a dramatic rise in mental illness since 1950 throughout the developed world and especially in America. It's a pathological attack of Keeping Up With The Joneses, an obsessive and envious comparing of what you own and who you are, of never being satisfied with yourself or what you've got.

In the case of the affluent teenage girls (but not poor ones or boys), between 1987 and 1999 their worries about school performance and their weight soared. Their anxieties perfectly matched a dramatic leap in their exam results and ever-greater pressures to look like Kate Moss or Posh Spice. Increased demands from parents, teachers and the media led to an epidemic of maladjusted comparing of themselves with other girls' looks and academic success.

Comparing to other people is a part of the human condition. If we want to be better at something, we naturally look toward people who have already achieved what we aspire to. Equally, if we want to cheer ourselves up, we gain succor from observing less accomplished performers than ourselves.

When looking for ways to improve my golf, for instance, I compare myself with my friend Paul, who is much better than me. But when comparing upwards you have to be careful. To avoid feeling hopelessly outclassed, I must put Paul's excellence in context by saying things to myself like, "he's been playing for years" and "he practices all the time." This is known as "discounting." Without it, I would not be able to learn from watching Paul without falling into despair.

On the other hand, when I play with my friend Hugo, who is useless, it's important that I allow my superiority to nourish my self-confidence (this will help in the hard times when I'm playing Paul). If I were depressed, I would be liable to say to myself, "I beat I lugo, but he'd probably win if he only practiced a bit more and had a few lessons." I would discount the fact that he is worse than me and gain no benefit to my self-esteem. Instead, I just enjoy being better.

American advanced capitalism has ruthlessly exploited our comparison instinct. More than that, it encourages grossly pathological ways of comparing, both upward and downward.

We are under continuous pressure from a very young age to compare ourselves with incredibly talented, beautiful and ultimately unreal people, all without discounting. Television and magazines give us the illusion that these stars are people just like us.

As a result, affluent 15-year-old girls are liable to say in all seriousness that they hope to be as successful as Madonna or

Posh Spice, directly comparing themselves and apparently oblivious to the extreme improbability of it ever happening. Feeling they almost know these women and encouraged by song lyrics and autobiographies that promise "you too can be anyone you want to be," the girls make no discount for what has made the stars stand out.

In Madonna's case, for instance, she is a Machiavellian workaholic who has used money and status to compensate for a terribly disturbed early childhood. As for Posh, she obsessively craves attention and was willing to do anything to be famous. Without these pathologies, a normal girl is unlikely to be prepared to go through the awful distortions necessary to achieve stardom.

Equally destructive is the fact that, when these increasingly perfectionist girls read their usually excellent exam results, or look at their pretty faces and nubile bodies in the mirror, they fail utterly to enjoy what they see. Instead, they look at others who are better than them in some minute regard ("better at math," "bigger boobs," "more friends"), and feel like failures. Worst of all, when they hear of others who have done worse or see girls less pretty, they shrug it off, discounting the evidence that all their work has not been in vain: their best is never good enough.

Compared with 1950, and with accelerating speed, a "grass is greener" mentality has been made a part of ourselves. Studies of lottery winners show that they soon readjust their sights and begin to long for what they do not have. They may now have a Merc and a Porsche, a large home and no need to work – but if only they could afford the yacht, the mansion, the helicopter . . .

Likewise, enormously wealthy people simply raise the standards of what they expect, so that even if they stay in the top hotels, drive the most opulent cars and so on, they will always feel there is a better one elsewhere. They are constantly infuriated by the smallest sign that what they have is less than the best.

Continual economic growth is only possible if needs are constantly diversifying to create new markets. There is a necessity for ever more diverse needs so that ever more specific products can be devised to meet them. Advanced capitalism maintains itself by fostering spurious individualism, pressuring us to define ourselves through our purchases, with ever more precisely marketed products that create a fetishistic concern to have "this" rather than "that," even when there is no significant practical or aesthetic difference. It profits from the dissatisfaction and rage that are engendered by unreal social comparisons, encouraging us to fill the consequent psychic void with material goods and drugs of solace (alcohol, illegal drugs, food, nicotine).

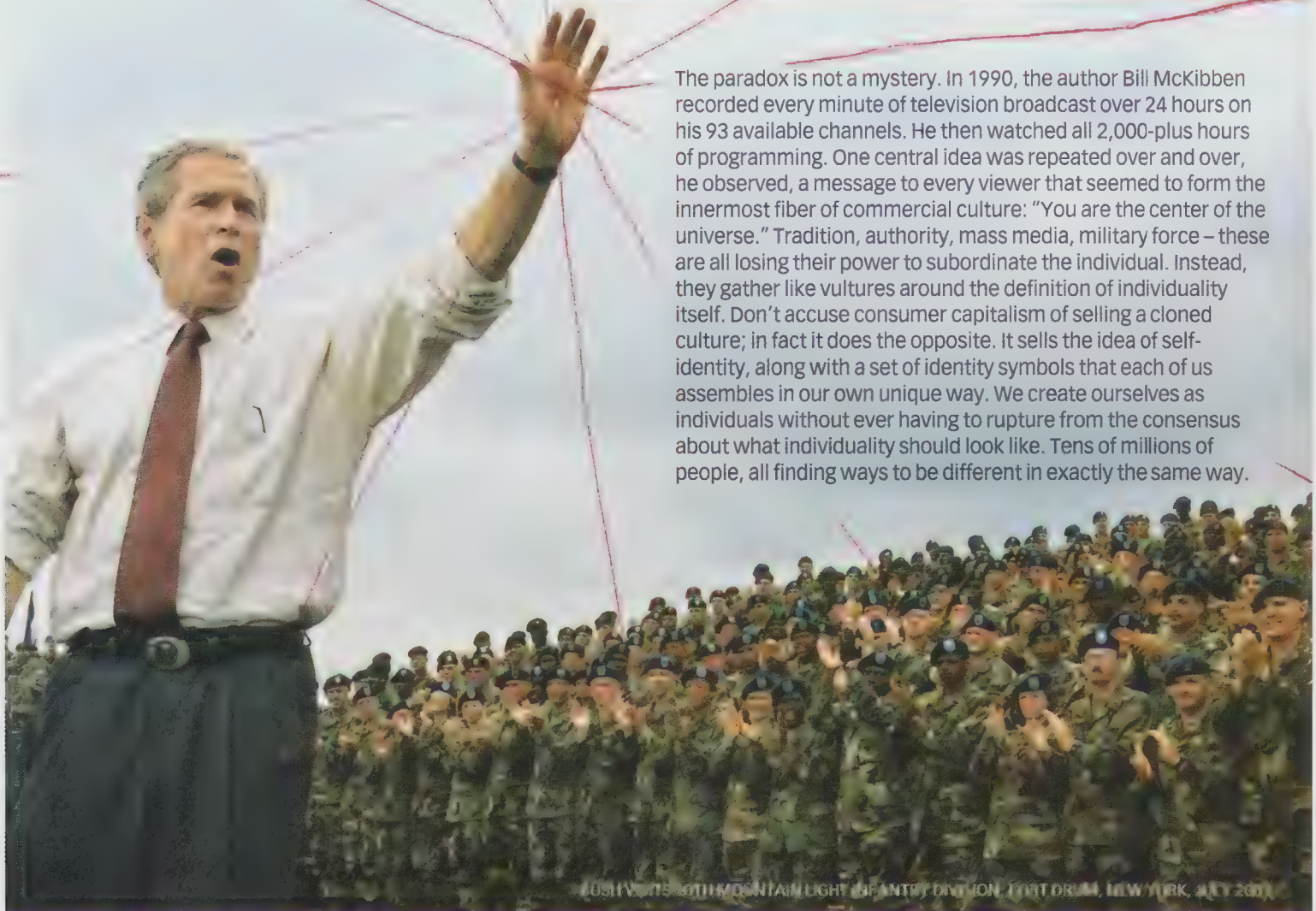
Money can even be made from restoring the chemical imbalance in our brains that results from these overheated ambitions and false identities, selling pills and therapeutic services to the damaged and subordinated. Capitalism does very nicely at both ends. It creates misery, and it cures it. Our inner lives foot the bill.

Oliver James is a clinical psychologist + author
of They F**k You Up (Bloomsbury, 2002)

For thousands of years of history, individualism was resisted by the ruling powers: social custom, religion, government. That conflict has ended. Now even the US Army Special Forces – an organization that can only exist through group loyalty and command obedience – has rebranded itself as the choice of individuals. "An Army of One," goes the new slogan, and no one even blinks at the cognitive dissonance. In fact, there isn't any. America is a nation of individuals, each with a powerful sense of individualism; together they have built a culture of widespread conformity and consensus with power.

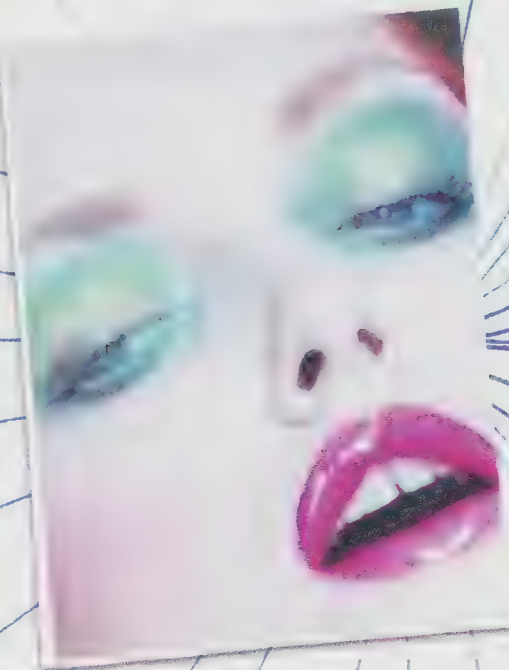


The paradox is not a mystery. In 1990, the author Bill McKibben recorded every minute of television broadcast over 24 hours on his 93 available channels. He then watched all 2,000-plus hours of programming. One central idea was repeated over and over, he observed, a message to every viewer that seemed to form the innermost fiber of commercial culture: "You are the center of the universe." Tradition, authority, mass media, military force – these are all losing their power to subordinate the individual. Instead, they gather like vultures around the definition of individuality itself. Don't accuse consumer capitalism of selling a cloned culture; in fact it does the opposite. It sells the idea of self-identity, along with a set of identity symbols that each of us assembles in our own unique way. We create ourselves as individuals without ever having to rupture from the consensus about what individuality should look like. Tens of millions of people, all finding ways to be different in exactly the same way.





The paradox works through the magic of cool.



Natasha Féline Creed. The middle name comes from Fellini, because her mom loved the director; the last name was invented by her grandfather, a German Jew running for his life. Even her name contains narratives that are more interesting than my own. Already I can feel it.

Natasha is 26, with mussed blonde hair and a long jean skirt (I can see from the re-sewn seams that she's altered the store-bought version). She wears chunky plastic earphones around her neck to listen to the hockey playoffs while she steams drinks. Anyone, an Eritrean or a Slovak or a Taiwanese – provided they were young and hip – could walk into the café, spot her halo of self-confidence, and say "She is the one."

She has photographs mounted on the walls, blurred shots of sloughs and weedy beaches. Next week she's going to Europe to shoot a Vespa convention: she's been a photographer for the Vespa Club of Canada for the last six years.

"I was always a little different in school," Natasha tells me when she sits down to chat. "We moved around a lot, so people were always interested in the new kids, the three blond sisters. Plus we were Jehovah's Witnesses. My parents are artists, they were a little crazy, and they

decided that they needed that kind of structure to raise kids in the 1970s. When I was older my family took a vote and decided that our Jehovah's Witness phase was over."

She wears a snug t-shirt that says "The Fox Cinema . . . Classic 35 mm porn." I ask her about it, and she gives an earnest appraisal of porn in the 1970s and the career of Ron "The Hedgehog" Jeremy. Next week her friend's theatre is airing one of the few 3D porn films ever made.

Natasha lifts her shirt to show a tattooed star on her stomach. Dr. Seuss wrote *Sneeches on the Beaches*, a fable in which the mark of nobility – the star on the belly – is subverted in order to create a classless society. Natasha's mother forbade her to have a tattoo, so she re-inked the star every week until she went under the needle at 18.

There are Japanese characters on the inside of her wrist and a dragon curls around her right biceps.

She is reluctant to discuss her own coolness, but finally she admits, "I notice that people notice me, that they ask about my clothes or where I get my hair done."

I notice myself fetishizing the sparkly facets: the tattoos, the rebellious Jehovah's Witness and earnest porn buff, the German Jew grandfather, all the little contradictions that make me feel, by comparison, predictable.

This is the other side of cool, not the intimidation but the magnetic pull, the sense that you want to be around this girl, that you want to be this girl.

Chris Tenove



- > Associating yourself with wealth, prestige, and power
- > is intoxicating. When I was a kid I used to get beat up
- > by this kid Adam. He was the strongest, most athletic,
- > most popular kid in school. He really humiliated me.
- > But every so often Adam would slip up and treat me like
- > a human being. In fact, when we were younger, we were
- > actually close friends. Anyway, when he was nice to me
- > it felt just wonderful – as if in those moments all my
- > hatred and resentment just didn't exist
- > As much as the world may hate the American bully,
- > they still get immense gratification from associating
- > with our culture. We have the money, the bombs, the
- > sex appeal. It's like the VIP guy in the club. You don't
- > really want to be him, because you know he's a soulless
- > asshole, but you wouldn't mind riding around in his limo
- > every once in a while, reaping the benefits of his
- > friendship. This is human nature.

Eric M. Brown





Every woman adores a Fascist.

The boot in the face. the brute

Brute heart of a brute like you.

- Sylvia Plath

IS AMERICA BECOMING FASCIST? SINCE MAINSTREAM MEDIA refuse to seriously ask this question, the analysis of where we are heading and what has gone wrong has been mostly off-base. Investigation of the kinds of underhanded, criminal tactics fascist regimes undertake to legitimize their agenda and accelerate the rate of change in their favor is dismissed as indulging in "conspiracy theory." If the f-word is uttered, observers are quick to note the obvious dissimilarities with previous variants of fascism. American writers dare not speak the truth.

The blinkered assertion that we are immune to the fascist virus ignores degrees of convergence and distinction based on the individual patient's history. The *New York Times* and other liberal voices have been obsessed in recent years with the rise of minority fascist parties in the Netherlands, France and other European countries. They have questioned the tastefulness of new books and films about Hitler, and again demonized the icons of Nazism. Max Frankel, former editor of the *Times*, quotes from biographer Joachim Fest in his review of *Speer: The Final Verdict*: "how easily, given appropriate conditions, people will allow themselves to be mobilized into violence, abandoning the humanitarian traditions they have built up over centuries to protect themselves from each other." Is Frankel hinting at his anxiety about the primal being that has arisen in America? The pace of events in the last two years has been almost as blindingly fast as it was after Hitler's consolidation of fascist power in 1933. Speed stuns and silences.

To pose the question doesn't mean that American fascism is a completed project; at any point, anything can happen to shift the course of history in a different direction. Yet after repeated and open corruption of the normal electoral process, several declarations of global war, adventurous and unprecedented military doctrines, selective suspension of the Bill of Rights and clear signals that a declaration of emergency is on the horizon, surely it is time to analyze the situation differently. Several of the apparent contradictions in the Bush administration's governance make perfect sense if the fascist prism is applied, but not with the usual perspective. Fascism is home, it is here to stay, and it better be countered with all the resources at our disposal.

American fascism taps into the perennial complaint against liberalism: that it fails to provide an authentic sense of belonging to the majority of people. America today wants to be communal and virile; it seeks to overcome what many have been convinced are the unreasonable demands of minorities and women; it wants to reinvigorate ideals of nation, region and race in order to take control of the future; it seeks to overcome the social divisiveness of capitalism and democracy, remolding the nation through propaganda and leadership.

We can notice obvious differences from the German or Italian nationalist traditions, of course – we have our own nationalist myths. In the near future, America can be expected to embark on a more radical search to define who is and who is not a part of the natural order: exclusion, deportation and eventually extermination might again become the order of things. Fascism can occur precisely at that moment of truth when the course of political history can tend to one direction or another. Nazism never had the support of the majority of Germans; at best about

a third fully supported it. About a third of Americans today are certifiably fascist; another 20 percent or so can be swayed around to particular causes with smart propaganda. The basic paradigm remains more or less intact.

Capitalism today is different, so are the means of propaganda, and so are the technological tools of suppression. But that is only a matter of variation, not opposition. With all of Germany's cultural strength, brutality won out; the same analysis can apply to America. Hitler never won clear majorities (his ascent to power was facilitated by the political elites), and yet once he was in power, he crushed all dissent; consider the parallels to the fateful, hair-splitting election of 2000 and its aftermath. Hitler took advantage of the Reichstag fire – the burning of the German parliament, which was blamed on communist arson – to totally reshape German institutions and culture; think of 9/11 as a close parallel. Hitler was careful to give the impression of always operating under legal cover; note again the similarity of a pseudo-legal shield for the actions of the American fascists, who stretch the Geneva Conventions by redefining prisoners of war as "unlawful combatants." One can go on and on in this vein.

If we look at historian Stanley Payne's classical general theory of fascism, we are struck by the increasing similarities with the American model:

- A. The Fascist Negations
 - Anti-liberalism.
 - Anti-communism.
 - Anti-conservatism.
- B. Ideology and Goals
 - Creation of a new nationalist authoritarian state.
 - Organization of a new kind of regulated, multi-class, integrated national economic structure.
 - The goal of empire.
 - Specific espousal of an idealist, voluntarist creed.
- C. Style and Organization
 - Emphasis on aesthetic structure, stressing romantic and mystical aspects.
 - Attempted mass mobilization with militarization of political relationships and style, and the goal of a mass party militia.
 - Positive evaluation and use of violence.
 - Extreme stress on the masculine principle.
 - Exaltation of youth.
 - Specific tendency toward an authoritarian, charismatic, personal style of command.

With American fascism, the first two negations are obvious; the third may seem unlikely. But fascism is not conservatism, and it takes issue with conservatism's anti-revolutionary stance. Conservatism's libertarian strand – an American staple – would not agree with fascism's "nationalist authoritarian state." Reaganite anti-government rhetoric might have been a precursor to fascism, but free market and deregulationist ideology cannot be labeled fascist.

Continuing to look at Payne's list, we note that the goal of empire has found open acceptance over the last couple of years.

Voluntarism has been elevated to iconic status, as AmeriCorps members are recruited and directed toward homeland-security measures. The mass party militia – especially large bands of organized, militarized youth – seems to be missing, but there is certainly no doubt about the glorification of violence. The masculine principle (think Donald “Rummy” Rumsfeld, or the president landing *Top Gun*-style on the deck of an aircraft carrier) has been elevated as the basis of policy-making. Command is authoritarian and personal. It is true that Bush is not as charismatic as Hitler, but one would have to ask if this is not a redundancy in a political model that raises the office of the presidency to an icon of celebrity.

It takes a bit more effort to notice American fascism’s emphasis on aesthetic structure, stressing romantic and mystical aspects. As Hebrew University political scientist Zeev Sternhell has described it for Nazi Germany, fascism in the American synthesis is a cultural rebellion, a revolutionary ideology with totalitarianism at its very essence.

In only the last few months, America has advanced tremendously from emerging to realized fascism. Its imperialist and expansionist tendencies need to be couched less and less in idealist terms for mass acceptance. The idea of a cohesive “working class” has been dormant for more than a decade. Oppositional groups are often self-silencing – the meek Democratic Party is only the most obvious example – but most of the ruling establishment continues to practice a mild form of liberalism and hopes that if things get too out of hand it can mobilize public opinion against brutal suppression.

George Mosse, author of *The Fascist Revolution*, describes fascism as viewing itself in a permanent state of war, enlisting the masses as “foot soldiers of a civic religion.” As Mosse points out, fascism seeks a higher form of democracy even as it rejects the customary forms of representative government. Government and corporate propaganda is pervasive in America; we need only to delineate its descent from the Nazi form. Mosse rejects the notion that fascism rules through terror; it is built, he says, upon a popular consensus. One must never underestimate the fertile ground American anti-intellectualism provides for more banal forms of propaganda and cultural terrorism. American media, entertainment and virtual technology have pioneered whole new methods of trivialization of “mass death” and elevation of brutality as a “great experience.” The current American aesthetic appreciation of technology, and especially the technology of war, is also of a piece with Hitler’s passions.

Even the puritanism of American fascism does not necessarily conflict with the Nazi emphasis on style and beauty. Nazism annexed “the pillars of respectability: hard work, self-discipline, and good manners,” along with chastity and family values. The US certainly has its analogs to Max Nordau, whose rebellion against decadence in art and literature so inspired the Nazis. (Think of the demonization of photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, and the ongoing attacks on alleged artistic degeneracy.) We must be willing to consider expanded definitions of how romanticism has been incorporated by American fascism.

Liberals might complain that in America there hasn’t been a

declared revolution, a fascist transformation that asserts itself as such. But fascism has simply taken over the liberals’ own platform, including its appeal to “tolerance and freedom.” As Mosse says, “Tolerance . . . was claimed by fascists in antithesis to their supposedly intolerant enemies, while freedom was placed within the community. To be tolerant meant not tolerating those who opposed fascism: individual liberty was possible only within the collectivity.” Fascism is not a deviance from popular cultural trends, but only the taming of them within revived nationalist myths. Mosse holds that fascism didn’t diverge from mainstream European culture; it absorbed most of what held great mass appeal. The same principles apply to American fascism.

Perhaps a final means of taking the measure of American fascism is through the writer and intellectual Umberto Eco and his 1995 essay “Ur-Fascism,” which identifies 14 characteristics of “eternal fascism.” Not all of them have to be present for a system to be considered fascist, and some may even be contradictory: Eco is astute enough to suggest a family of resemblance, overlap and kinship, and the analyst’s task is to note which particular characteristics apply to a system and understand the reasons for the absence of others, rather than dismiss the fascist categorization if some features from a previous fascist variant do not apply. “There was only one Nazism, and we cannot describe the ultra-Catholic Falangism of Franco as Nazism,” Eco says of the differences between fascist movements, adding, “Remove the imperialist dimension from Fascism, and you get Franco or Salazar; remove the colonialist dimension, and you get Balkan Fascism.”

All 14 characteristics of Eco’s matrix of ur-fascism apply to America to some degree. (1) the cult of tradition; (2) the rejection of modernism; (3) the cult of action for action’s sake; (4) the idea that dissent is betrayal; (5) fear of difference, or racism; (6) the appeal to individual or social frustration; (7) obsession with conspiracies, along with xenophobia and nationalism; (8) the message that the enemy is at once too strong and too weak (note the media spin on Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein); (9) the idea that pacifism is collusion with the enemy, and that life is a permanent war; (10) scorn for the weak; (11) the cult of heroism; (12) machismo, or transferring the “will to power onto sexual questions”; (13) the belief that individual rights are subordinate to the unity of the state, and that fascism “has to oppose ‘rotten’ parliamentary governments”; and (14) ur-fascism uses a language of propaganda.

No doubt, fascism is a descriptor too carelessly thrown around. Perhaps a non-controversial statement may be that the fascist tendency always exists, at the very least latent and dormant. But when more and more of the latency becomes actualized, there comes a point when the nature of the problem has to be redefined. We may already have crossed that point. As Eco notes, “Ur-fascism can still return in the most innocent of guises. Our duty is to unmask it and to point the finger at each of its new forms – every day, in every part of the world.”

Anis Shivani is at work on a novel about South Asians in New York during the boom years. He welcomes comments at <Anis_Shivani_ab92@post.harvard.edu>.



Do you see where this is going? For the first time in history, a culture of cool is turning into a culture of fear. We are living in two parallel realities. In the first, people still get plastic surgery on reality TV; they still blow a collective \$100 million on every summer blockbuster; they still commit suicide on real-time webcam; they still follow headlines that read, "Who Was Stylin' at the NBA Draft?" But in the second reality, body bags are coming home from Iraq. Immigration officials make "preventative arrests" and refuse to release the names of their secret detainees. Prisoners of war are held without trial in Guantánamo Bay, and there is all-party agreement on surveillance, infiltration, total information awareness. With every disturbance, with every sound of a boot kicking in a door somewhere in the city, "normal life" whips back on an ever-sharper arc. It becomes a pattern. A pattern of collaboration.



you never commit yourself



you have love

Every Generation Has Its Vietnam.



Comin revolution; soon be on
the way; first ~~be~~ begining
underground then be comin too your
town & soon you just can't stay
away

chors

Aaron Walters



REVOLUTION

People will feel a sense of... the... with and... changing explanations... constantly thrust upon them... coupled with a... to conform to the... down by these same... and management of daily life in the... of... and national survival. Subverting symbolic man power in... police surveillance, brutal attacks on... and... backed up by a network of spying and reporting on each other by citizens generally, all under the guise of "national security."

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL O'NEILL

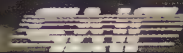
PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL O'NEILL



When you
control the ground,
you make the rules.

FUTURE COMBAT SYSTEMS WILL MAKE THE WORLD'S BEST FIGHTING FORCE EVEN BETTER. The U.S. Army is transforming to meet the changing needs of the 21st century. The world's most capable combat force is becoming even more agile, deployable, lethal and survivable. As lead integrator for Future Combat Systems, we're committed to finding the best solutions industry has to offer. So we're talking to many potential partners from around the globe. And we're creating state-of-the-art simulations to ensure promising answers become genuine solutions. Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come. For a transformed Army, that time is now.

FROM JANE'S DEFENCE WEEKLY, MAY 2003





COOL Fascismo

And you? Are you in danger? Will you feel the creeping terror or the dull death of liberty? Of course not: everyday life continues; in fact, everyday life is more noticeable than ever. Take a look in the mirror. You're not a Storm Trooper. You're not a face in the mob. You are still an individual. Up to date. Looking good, looking cool. It fits you like a uniform.

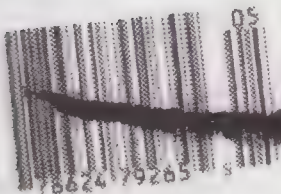
A full-page photograph of George W. Bush in a military flight suit, holding a helmet. He is standing outdoors with a soldier in full combat gear in the background. The image has a slightly grainy, high-contrast quality.

"You have to go in and tell them: 'We're gonna do what we did in Germany and Japan. We're gonna write your constitution. We're gonna install your government. We're gonna write your laws. We're gonna watch your every move for a decade, and then maybe you'll get a chance to do it yourself.'"

-Senior Washington Military Analyst

adbusters

Otro mundo es pos.
ible. Il ya bien
un autre monde poss
ible. Another world
is possible.







- > What makes you think you have the right to drive around with a ton of
- > metal wrapped around you, the right to twist a tap and get hot water,
- > the right to flick a switch and get your house warmed up?

- > ¿Qué te hace pensar que tienes el derecho de conducir por allí envuelto en
- > una tonelada de metal, el derecho de girar una llave y tener agua caliente,
- > el derecho de tocar un interruptor y tener calor en tu casa?

- > Qu'est-ce qui vous fait croire que vous avez le droit de vous promener
- > partout dans votre tonne de métal sur roues, le droit d'ouvrir un robinet
- > et d'avoir de l'eau chaude, le droit d'appuyer sur un bouton et d'avoir
- > votre maison bien chauffée?

**52%
FAT***

**"THE AMBIENCE WAS MECHANICAL,
THE POTATOES WERE OBSCENE AND
TASTING OF CARDBOARD,
AND THE BREAD POOR.
I FOUND IT ALIENATING AND VULGAR."**

Italian food critic Edoardo Raspelli, after a "field trip" to McDonald's in the year 2000. In May, McDonald's launched a defamation lawsuit against Raspelli for further criticism published in *La Nazione* newspaper.



72 sq. inches

As a McDonald's laying hen, I would like to express my gratitude to the boss. The new guidelines requiring suppliers to provide each of us with 72 square inches of living space made my year at the factory farm surprisingly bearable. Yes, I still had to pump out 250 eggs, and I suffered a few broken bones from calcium deficiency and my beak was "trimmed" as they say. But as I head off to the slaughterhouse, I know that things could have been worse. My grandparents, in their day, were lucky to get 53 inches, and let me tell you, when you're crammed into a cage with five other surly hens, an extra 20 inches means a lot

Denny's (corporate headquarters: Spartanburg, South Carolina; annual sales: \$30 billion) has long been the major player in America's "casual family dining" business. Other chains, like Applebee's, are gaining ground, but all operate on the same high-volume/low-price cookie-cutter model. Cracks are beginning to show, however. People are tired of eating crappy food, and the marketing execs know it - note the deluge of so-called "healthy alternatives" now on offer, including wraps, salads and fresh fruit. But calories aren't all that people are counting: there is also a growing concern about the cost of industrial food production to everything from our waterways to our sense of community. That's the new bottom line.

Dairy Products: From the "confined dairy operations" of Central Valley, California, where cows are expected to pump out 100 pounds of milk a day. It's made possible with a high-protein diet and injections of bovine growth hormone (rBGH), a substance banned in every country except the U.S. The milk is shipped cross-country in rolling tanker trucks, burning millions of gallons of fossil fuels each year.

Vegetables: From agri-business suppliers in the California Sunbelt. Each slice of tomato or leaf of lettuce has traveled an average of 1,518 miles on the back of a truck to reach your plate. Then again, it's designed for the rigors of the road: irradiated, genetically modified, treated with chemical preservatives and/or picked green and left to ripen in the box.

Meat: From the commercial feedlots of the southwest USA. Pinpointing the exact source is impossible; ranches were long ago surpassed by "confined animal feeding operations" - factory farms. You can bet the cow was raised on a steady diet of Roundup Ready Corn™ - America's most chemically treated crop - and treated with Rumensin, Tylosin or similar antibiotics, along with hormones like Revlar to "encourage" rapid development.

French Fries: From the potato processing plants of the northwest USA. Odds are good that the fries arrived via one of McCain's 30 worldwide processing plants (company motto: "One World, One Fry"), which churn out a million pounds of frozen fries an hour. Once known for its diversity, American potato farming has been reduced to a monoculture of Russet Burbank potatoes.

Denny's Classic Burger and fries: \$5.19; milkshake: \$2.99

The Farmers Diner, owned and founded by Tod Murphy in Barre, Vermont, has a simple motto: serve local food to local people. It's not just another back-to-the-land dream – it's a bona fide business with first year sales of \$550,000. In real-world terms, that's brisk enough trade to keep 174 acres of farmland in production, pay eight farmers \$50,000 each and create seven new farm jobs. Over the next five years, Murphy plans to open four new restaurants and a central processing plant in the area and then replicate the pod model in other parts of the country. Turning the high-volume/cheap food dining model on its head, he has created a new market for small farmers and provided 70,000 customers with "rich food for regular folks."

Vegetables: From Cedar Circle Farm, East Thetford, Vermont. It's owned and operated by longtime activists Kate Duesterberg and Will Allen. They bought the farm three years ago and converted it to an organic operation, selling most of their produce at their farm stand.

Dairy Products: From Rock Bottom Farm, Strafford, Vermont. The state has lost over 8,000 dairy farms in the four decades since the mid 1950s when factory farms moved in. The second-generation Rock Bottom Farm is run by three brothers – Earl, Barry and William Ransom – who ship organic dairy fresh to the diner.

French Fries: From the farms of Peasely, Chappel, Guildhall and Williamstown, Vermont. The Farmers Diner cuts its fries fresh every day from potatoes grown in the state. They're never pre-cooked or frozen, and the cooks use every part of the potato.

Beef: From Montana. Adam Hirsch, Straborn, Vermont. Monty Adams bought Montana yak to get back to a more pleasure-fed cattle ranching after working for years in commercial feedlots. He happily makes the diner's space to farm, raise his milks and all livestock must have access to outside pastures.

Farmers Diner cheeseburger with fries: \$6.75; milkshake: \$3.25



"KEY OCEAN FISH SPECIES RAVAGED, STUDY SAYS." I READ the headline again. Then I turned to another clipping. "Few Of World's Large Fish Remain, Study Says." Above the article was a photograph. A smiling Philippino shouldering a tuna the size of a beer keg. I tried to connect the words with the image. I read on.

Every single species of large fish has been over-fished for the past 50 years to the point of disaster. Ninety percent of the ocean's big fish are gone. Ninety percent. The outrage expanded in my gut. "This is fucked," I said to no one in particular. Forgetting for a second that I was in my editor's office.

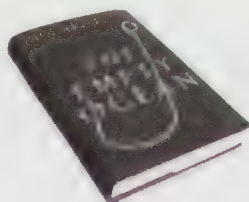
"What really gets to me," he said, "is that this only warrants a two-column article on page four of the paper." It was actually page two, but his point was still valid. This was a major issue, but it was not big news. A writer sitting nearby piped in, "For me, the weird part is that you can still walk into the grocery store and buy a 79-cent can of tuna." He was right. I'd been out for sushi myself just the night before. As always, we had ordered tuna and salmon.

Ninety percent gone. I imagined great swaths of empty ocean. The surfers must feel safer, I thought to myself. Why hadn't I heard about this? That's what was getting me. I listen to the radio, I read the headlines, I even catch the TV news on occasion. The media had clearly dropped the ball on this one. Even the clippings in front of me seemed to soften the news. "New study reveals" . . . "study says" . . . "in a newly released study." Put the word "study" in a headline and you've lost half your readers. People want crisis, disaster: they want to be horrified, not taught a lesson.

"We are tampering with the life support system of the planet," the study's author was quoted in one article, "and that's not a good thing to do . . .

We know that current fishing practices will lead to the collapse of the fishing industry."

I wanted to get to the bottom of this, to put the screws to



What seemed vast and limitless – even threatening – has become our biggest victim. *The Empty Ocean: Plundering the World's Marine Life*, by Richard Ellis (Island Press, 2003), is a species-by-species look at how industrial fishing, pollution and the trophy sport fishery have ravaged once teeming seas. The consequences are immeasurable and prospects are bleak, but a reversal is still possible. Hunting restrictions, no-fish zones, changing fashion trends and activist intervention may help curb the fatal "progress" of the fishing industry.

some negligent editors. They have a responsibility, especially in this age of media conglomeration, to inform readers of important issues. "You can't expect that from corporate media," insisted one friend, another writer, when I told her of my quest.

But she was missing my point. Like it or not, most people gain what little understanding they have of the world from the morning paper and the evening news. That's why we have to hold the mainstream media accountable.

Editors at most major media outlets weren't interested in talking to me. The few who did seemed to understand where I was coming from. "Getting on page one is always a competitive business," said the *Washington Post's* science editor. "There are times when we're frustrated

ourselves that stories we believe strongly about don't get on." Fisheries issues, he added, are an ongoing story, one that the papers cover over the months and years whenever new information comes to light. But still, the papers seem to have space for double-page spreads on Pottermania and movies like *The Hulk*. Why not natural disasters like this?

I wasn't satisfied. I told other friends about the story. Mostly I got blank looks and courteous nods. I found myself exaggerating to get the reactions that I wanted. "Your children aren't even going to know what tuna tastes like." "By the time we're 60, we'll be eating protein pellets for dinner. There'll be no real food left."

I had no factual basis for these statements. It dawned on me that no one really cares. The papers could print whole sections on the state of the oceans; it wouldn't matter. People – myself included – can't connect with this story. It makes no sense. Ninety percent of the big fish are gone? The frozen food aisles are stocked with fillets, canned tuna is cheap and readily available and we can order mahi-mahi at any restaurant in town.

Maybe my anger was a cover for the disappointment and betrayal that I was really feeling. How had I let my contact points with the natural world become so corroded? Why had we stood by and let the corporations and bureaucrats betray us so badly? Somehow, though, I maintained a glint of hope. I know we aren't apathetic, that we still possess the capacity to care – I've witnessed it in other crises. But we need to peel back the layers and again start to feel the earth's growing pains. We need to turn up the volume so we can hear the creaks and groans of our natural surroundings. We need to reconnect with our food.

Kevin Arnold

CHINOOK

(also known as king, Tyee, or spring)



ONCORHYNCHUS TSHAWYTSCHA

PARANOIA. IT TURNS OUT, IS GOOD FOR THE ECONOMY. After the anthrax hit the fan in the fall of 2001, the threat of bioterrorism had the Bush administration scrambling to close newly revealed gaps in the national security blanket. And they're paying for it: \$6 billion in the budget this year alone, with \$1.75 billion assigned to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for biomedical research into "countermeasures against agents of bioterrorism."

What's that? Fresh money? The research community looks at the new grant guidelines and adjusts its projects accordingly, such as 20/20 Genesystems' about-face from tumor detecting and monitoring technology to the BioCheck Powder Screening Kit.

Under the auspices of the NIH, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) has also begun a shift away from basic research with its strategic plan to stimulate biodefense product development. This includes a commitment to "enormously strengthen interactions with the private sector, including biotechnology companies and large pharmaceutical corporations," according to NIAID director Anthony Fauci. As for those Big Pharma firms, the race is on for guaranteed sales of vaccines and treatments against such lethal rarities as anthrax, ebola and plague: should taxpayer-funded research manage to develop them.

Ironically, paying for biodefense vaccines threatens the very research that produced them. The White House budget office recently stipulated that NIAID must purchase \$233 million worth

of a new anthrax vaccine, and while the money must come from NIAID's budget, it isn't to touch the biodefense programs.

In short, NIAID will have to slash funding grants to other areas of its research program – like basic immunology, infectious diseases and AIDS research – in order to bankroll the bio-war demand.

To house the expanded program of biotech research, NIAID will also distribute \$275 million in federal grants to build one or two new Level 4 Biosafety labs. There are currently five such labs in the US and one in Canada, with two additional American labs already in development. Level 4 is the rating reserved for organisms that cause life-threatening disease, may be airborne, and for which there is no effective treatment.

Local communities are nervous, even hostile, at the prospect of housing Level 4 Biosafety in their corners of the continent. The NIH said that it will announce the new sites in fall 2003, and that community support will figure into the decision. In Hamilton, Montana, a community coalition has delayed a four-year lab construction schedule by an additional 12 months by demanding an environmental assessment, and citizens have convinced even the mayor to revoke her welcome to the proposed laboratory in Davis, California. Residents of Boston have had less success after being systematically shut out of all proposal planning.

Wherever the new Level 4 labs turn up, expect the biotech and pharmaceutical industries to follow. One rule didn't change with the war-on-terror world: if you fund it, they will come.

Merrilee Hughes

COMBINE AND CONQUER

BY MARK LEONARD

The European Union's obsession with legislation is usually taken as a sign of weakness - a foil to the pyrotechnic might of the US military machine. But take a closer look: the bureaucrats in Brussels have been busy creating a new political space that has the power to make the 21st century the European century. The EU's geographical expansion to 25 countries, which will grow to include a dozen smaller ones and maybe even Russia, is nothing compared with its increasing legal and moral reach. The 80,000 pages of laws the EU has developed since the common market was formed in 1957 - influencing everything from genetic labeling to human rights - have made Europe the world's first viral political space, spreading its authority in three innovative ways.

First, it spreads by stealth. Although the EU legislates up to half of its member states' laws, most of their trade, and many policy decisions - from agriculture to economics - it's practically invisible. Take Britain. There are no European courts, legislative chambers, or business regulations on display in London. Instead, just as a virus takes over a healthy cell, the EU operates through the shell of traditional political structures. The British House of Commons, British Law Courts and British civil servants are still there, but they have all become covert agents of the EU. This is no accident. By creating common standards that are implemented through national institutions, Europe can take over the world without becoming a target for hostility. While every US company, embassy and military base is a terrorist target, Europe's invisibility allows it to spread its influence without provocation. Put bluntly, even if there were people angry enough to want to fly planes into European buildings, there is no World Trade Center to target.

Second, the EU thrives on diversity. The former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger once complained that Europe doesn't have a single telephone number. When there's a crisis, Americans don't know who to turn to as the authentic voice of opinion. This is because Europe possesses many centers of power. Even the splits between new and old and the accidental good cop/bad cop routine played by Britain and France, can be seen as a sign of the EU's strength. The ultimate failure of diplomacy leading up to the war on Iraq shows that the EU is less powerful when it doesn't share a common vision of the world, but even so, the multi-headed nature of the union did force the US to take its case to the UN.

The best way to understand how Europe functions is to look at a globally networked business like Visa. By sharing control widely, and by making it impossible for any single faction or institution to dominate, a networked business can combine its global presence with innovation and diversity to gain the kind of edge normally reserved for smaller entities. Visa, though it represents the largest single block of consumer spending power in the world (\$362.4 trillion annually), is a skeletal organization with just a few thousand employees. The fact that Europe does not have one leader - but

rather a network of centers of power united by common policies and goals - means that it can expand to accommodate ever-greater numbers of countries without collapsing, and continue to provide its members with the benefits of being the largest market in the world.

Third, Europe "syndicates" its legislation and values, often by threatening others with economic isolation. Many governments outside the continent have adopted Europe's regulations to get access to its market. Even US companies have been forced to follow European regulations in at least three spheres: mergers and acquisitions, genetically modified foods, and data privacy. But this model of passive aggression has had its most dramatic effect in the EU's backyard. Consider some of the dangers faced by both Europe and the US: drug trafficking, large flows of migrants across hard-to-police borders and transnational criminal networks. Europe encourages political and economic reform by holding out the possibility of integration into the EU, and this strategy has had more success than the swift military interventions of the Monroe Doctrine. While the EU is deeply involved in Serbia's reconstruction and supports its desire to be "rehabilitated" as a European state, the US offers Colombia no such hope of integration through multilateral institutions or structural funds, only the temporary "assistance" of American military training missions and aid, and the raw freedom of the US market.

This new type of power means that Europe effects change from the inside out. By contrast, when the US engages other countries, it does so through the prism of geopolitics. Talks with Russia focus on nuclear weapons, NATO expansion and civilian control of the military. Talks with Colombia look at the flow of drugs across its borders. Europeans start from the other end of the spectrum: What values underpin the state? What are its constitutional and regulatory frameworks? Turkey renounced the death penalty to further its chance of admission into the EU; Britain rescinded its ban on gays in the military; and Italy reformed its profligate economic ways to meet EU standards. Europe's obsession with legal frameworks means that it can completely transform the countries it comes into contact with, instead of just skimming the surface. The US might have changed the regime in Afghanistan, but Europe is changing all of Polish society, from its economic policies and property laws to its treatment of minorities and what gets served on the nation's tables.

The overblown rhetoric directed at the "American Empire" misses the fact that the US reach is shallow and narrow. The lonely superpower can bribe, bully, or impose its will almost anywhere in the world - but when its back is turned, its potency wanes. The strength of the EU, conversely, is broad and deep: once sucked into its sphere of influence, countries are changed forever. Europe is a state of mind that cannot be contained by traditional boundaries.

Mark Leonard is director of the Foreign Policy Centre in London and author of Network Europe: The Case for a New Europe. This article was Reprinted from Wired, June 2003.

Why America Outpaces Europe (Clue: The God Factor)

By NIALL FERGUSON

IN the pious, industrious United States, the Protestant work ethic is alive and well. Its death is a peculiarly European phenomenon – and has grim implications for the future of the European Union on the eve of its eastward expansion.

Many economists have missed this because they are focused on measures of productivity, like output per hour worked. On that basis, the Western European economies have spent most of the past half-century spectacularly catching up with the United States.

But what the productivity numbers don't reveal is the dramatic divergence over two decades between the amount of time Americans work and the amount of time Western Europeans work. By American standards, Western Europeans are astonishingly idle.

According to a recent study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the average working American spends 1,976 hours a year on the job. The average German works just 1,535 – 22 percent less. The Dutch and Norwegians put in even fewer hours. Even the British do 10 percent less work than their trans-Atlantic cousins. Between 1979 and 1999, the average American working year lengthened by 50 hours, or nearly 3 percent. But the average German working year shrank by 12 percent.

Yet even these figures understate the extent of European idleness, because a larger proportion of Americans work. Between 1973 and 1998 the percentage of the American population in employment rose from 41 percent to 49 percent. But in Germany and France the percentage fell, ending up at 44 and 39 percent. Unemployment rates in most Northern European countries are also markedly higher than in the United States.

Then there are the strikes. Between 1992 and 2001, the Spanish economy lost, on average, 271 days per 1,000 employees as a result of strikes. For Denmark, Italy, Finland, Ireland and France, the figures range between 80 and 120 days, compared with fewer than 50 for the United States.

All this is the real reason that the American economy has surged ahead of its European competitors in the past two decades. It is not about efficiency. It is simply that Americans work more. Europeans take longer holidays and retire earlier; and many more European workers are either unemployed or on strike.

How to explain this sharp divergence? The countries where the least work is done in Europe turn out to be those that were once predominantly Protestant. While the overwhelmingly Catholic French and Italians work about 15 to 20 percent fewer hours a year than Americans, the more Protestant Germans and Dutch and the wholly Protestant Norwegians work 25 to 30 percent less.

Northern Europe's declines in working hours coincide almost exactly with steep declines in religious observance. In the Netherlands, Britain, Germany, Sweden and Denmark, less than 10 percent of the population now attend church at least once a month, a dramatic decline since the 1960's. (Only in Catholic Italy and Ireland do more than a third of the population go to church on a monthly basis.) In the recent Gallup Millennium Survey of religious attitudes, 49 percent of Danes, 52 percent of Norwegians and 55 percent of Swedes said God did not matter to them. In North America, by comparison, 82 percent of respondents said God was "very important."

This has profound implications for the next year's enlargement of the EU, when the Baltic States, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and the Czech and Slovak Republics will become full EU members. The impact of adopting the EU's economic and social rules is bound to be far greater for this generation of new Europeans. They should remember what happened in the 1990s to the East Germans, who initially celebrated their accession to the vastly richer West German Federal Republic, only to discover it meant unemployment for roughly a third of the work force.

This is where productivity statistics matter. East Europeans are currently able to

compensate for their low productivity by working longer hours. The average Czech worker does more than 2,000 hours of work a year – a figure steadily rising since the collapse of Communism, even as working hours in Western Europe were declining.

Unfortunately, EU labor legislation will reverse this, to prevent what the West Europeans disingenuously call "social dumping" – the competition from low-wage economies. Czechs will be obliged to work less by a combination of legal entitlements to a shorter working week, longer holidays, higher minimum wages and generous unemployment benefits when their employers go bust because of all this.

The question is how much the Czechs will care about the ensuing enforced leisure. Like nearly all the 10 new members of the EU, the Czech Republic is a predominantly Catholic country. (The exceptions are Protestant Estonia and Latvia.) But one striking consequence of 40-plus years of socialist rule in Eastern Europe has been a decline of religious belief almost as marked as that in Northern Europe.

According to Gallup, 48 percent of Western Europeans almost never go to church, but the figure for Eastern Europe is just a bit less, at 44 percent. Meanwhile, 64 percent of Czechs regard God as not mattering at all – a higher rate than even in Sweden. In this respect the difference between "old" and "new" Europe may turn out to be less than many Americans now believe. Enlargement of the EU may simply confirm the eastward spread of the leisure preference in an increasingly work-shy and Godless European continent.

The loser will be the European economy, which will continue to fall behind the United States in terms of its absolute annual output. The winner will be the spirit of secularized sloth, which has finally slain the Protestant work ethic in Europe.

Copyright © 2003 by The New York Times Co., reprinted with permission. Niall Ferguson is the author of Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power (2003).

coolest of all games, poker
el más "cool" de todos los juegos, el poker
le plus cool de tous les jeux le poker.





US SOLDIERS, LOCKED AND LOADED, FACE PROTESTERS IN BAGHDAD, JUNE 2003

ALONGSIDE BENEVOLENT EMPIRE AND HUMANITARIAN WAR, there's a new oxymoron making the rounds in the US. It's 'stagnant recovery,' a reference that reflects the contradictory economic indicators that have forced the American economy into a strange holding pattern. Consider: the devaluation of the US greenback is indicative of the languid economy, but it also provides a boost for exports. Likewise, the continuous slide of Federal Reserve interest rates down to 45-year lows puts some spark in the home-buyer market.

No one expected that the US would rebound easily after September 11, but the mix of good and bad news shows no signs of dissipating. And of course, some news is just plain bad. Certainly workers are feeling the pinch with the job market mired in its longest hiring slump since the Depression and the unemployment rate at a nine-year high. Being the world's largest debtor can't help matters either.

And what about the man who's supposedly running the show? George W. Bush may have been able to pull himself away from the frat house keg long enough to collect his MBA from Harvard, but dollars and cents are not his strength. Tellingly, although he still enjoys fairly high overall ratings, less than 50 percent of Americans approve of Bush's handling of the economy.

But the president is a man on a mission. Re-election in 2004 is a must, and he will not drop the ball like his old man did. So with no limits on fundraising, Republicans plan to raise an

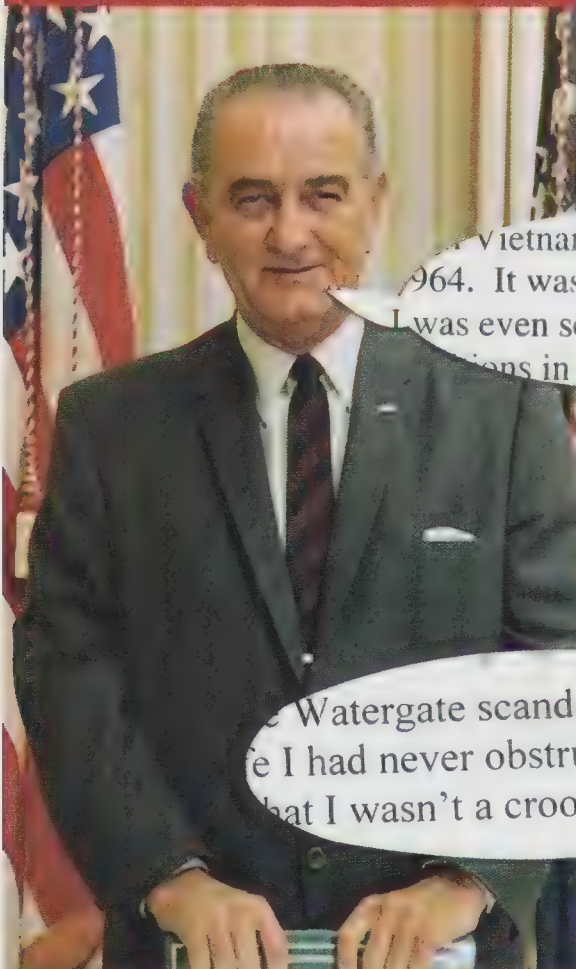
unprecedented \$200 million to make it happen. And since they're all too aware that the country's shaky finances tripped up Bush Sr.'s aspirations for a second term, they're intensifying efforts to ensure the economy recovers. Or are they?

There is whispering in some quarters that the more extremist elements of the White House actually want the economy to go into a tailspin. With the public treasury gutted, Republicans are better positioned to take a chainsaw to the social programs they so despise. Objections would be muffled by the rhetoric that accompanies poor economic performance: 'Times are tough. We need to make difficult decisions. We did not come to these conclusions easily.'

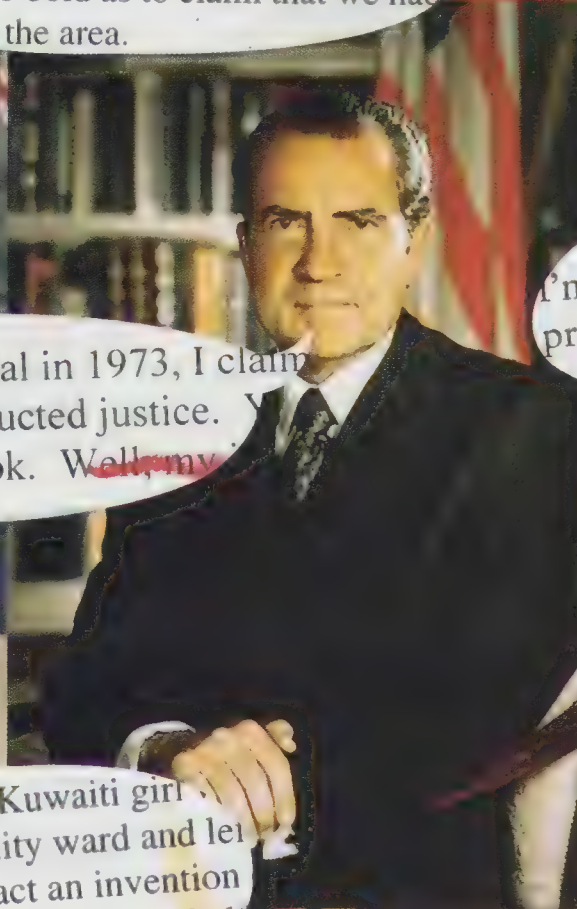
Before you assume this is the fodder of left-wing conspiracy theorists, consider that the *Financial Times* - a conservative British business rag - is one of the voices advancing the argument that the Republicans would welcome a fiscal crisis. After Bush announced his most recent tax cut, the paper concluded that 'the lunatics are now in charge of the asylum.'

So far, the White House cabal is looking at a win-win. If the economy tanks, the Republicans can deride the tax-and-spend Democrats and roll back social programs to the dawn of the New Deal. If it rebounds, Bush can claim financial wizard status and cruise to a second term. And if it stays in the muddy middle? That might be the one scenario that no one can predict.

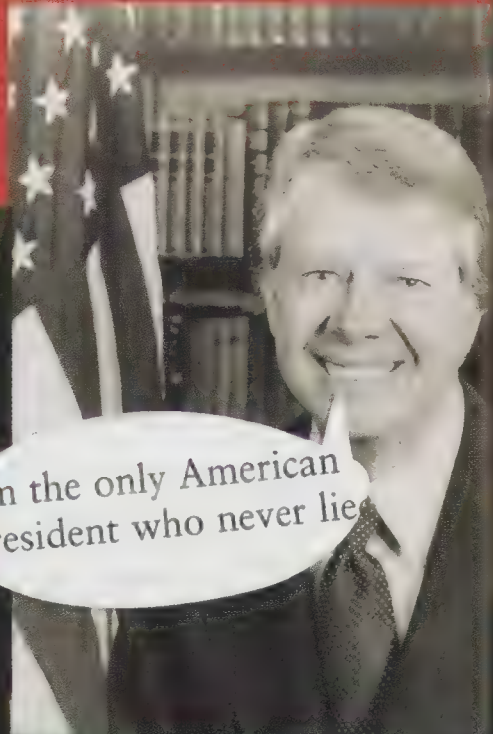
Nicholas Klassen



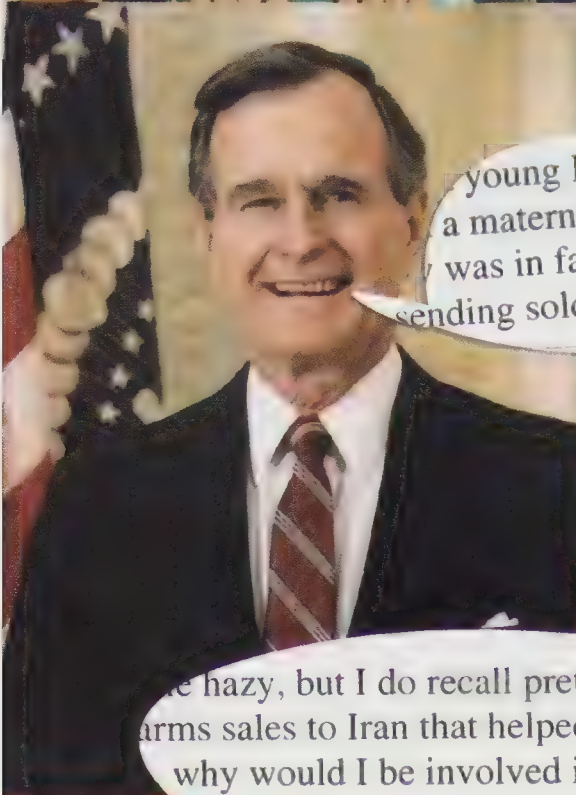
...Vietnamese patrol boats firing on...
1964. It was a great ploy to justify a more...
I was even so bold as to claim that we had...
...ions in the area.



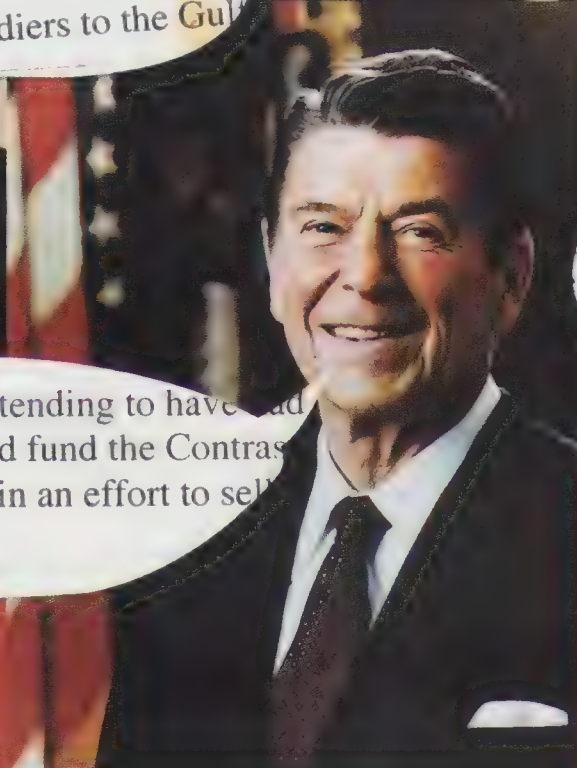
...the Watergate scandal in 1973, I claim...
...e I had never obstructed justice. You...
...that I wasn't a crook. Well, my...



I'm the only American
president who never lied



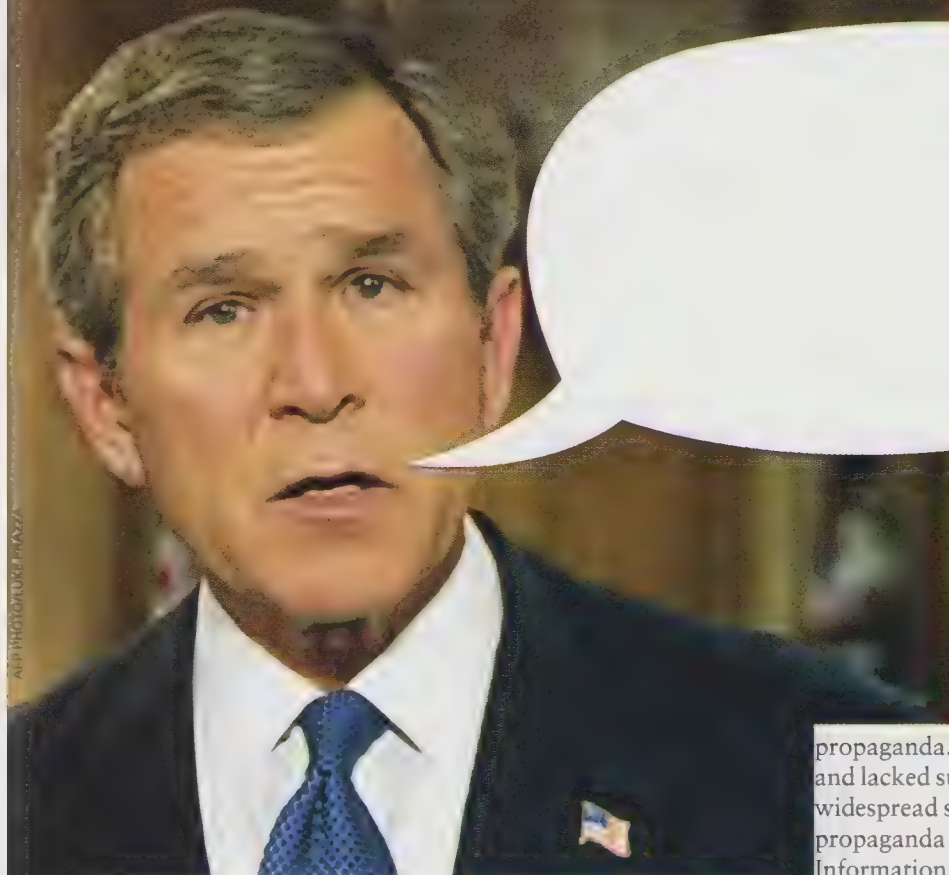
...young Kuwaiti girl...
...a maternity ward and let...
...was in fact an invention...
...sending soldiers to the Gulf...



...e hazy, but I do recall pretending to have...
...arms sales to Iran that helped fund the Contras...
...why would I be involved in an effort to sell...
...promoted terrorism?



...ged my finger at the...
...rican people and lied...
...gh my teeth.



"THE TWENTIETH CENTURY SAW THREE DEVELOPMENTS OF great political importance," wrote labor-relations theorist Alex Carey: "the growth of democracy, the growth of corporate power, and the growth of corporate propaganda as a means of protecting corporate power against democracy."

The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in a democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government, which is the true ruling power of this country.

— Edward Bernays,
Propaganda, 1928

As the working classes grew more militant, however, corporate greed fell from the social agenda. The anxious middle and upper classes were demanding social control.

In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson turned to a journalist, Walter Lippmann, as a confidante and aide. Lippmann, wary of what he saw as ignorance among the masses, argued for social management by a technical elite who would serve established power. At the same time, preeminent social theorist Gabriel Tarde had begun to argue that the "public" — physically separated but now connected by mass media — had replaced the "crowd" in political importance. Tarde saw public opinion as malleable, and mass media as the way to manage it and maintain social order.

World War I was a watershed for public relations and

As told in Stuart Ewen's *PR! A Social History of Spin*, the first public relations men were investigative journalists who sought to expose corporate corruption and desperate living conditions during America's era of industrialization. They called themselves "progressive publicists," aiming for social reform.

propaganda. The war was unpopular with socialists and pacifists, and lacked support from immigrants and isolationists. Facing widespread social agitation, Wilson created a massive propaganda ministry called the Committee on Public Information. The CPI enlisted progressive journalists as well as reps from the emerging film industry, the arts, advertising and even the clergy.

It was a new era of propaganda — symbols replaced facts, and appeals to emotion replaced appeals to reason. The CPI marked the first time the mass media had been harnessed as a large-scale vehicle for public persuasion, and it met with astonishing success. A steady diet of calls-to-arms in the name of patriotism, along with manufactured tales of atrocity (one story described German soldiers tearing limbs from Belgian babies — recall the 1991 news reports that Iraqi soldiers had thrown Kuwaiti babies from their incubators, a claim that was later proved utterly false), created feverish and widespread support for the war.

Within the CPI was a rising talent named Edward Bernays, an immigrant Austrian Jew. Known today as the father of modern PR, Bernays turned social-control theory into a practical practice. He pioneered the use of psychology in marketing, and invented many of the major techniques and strategies still in use today. His 1923 book, *The Engineering of Consent*, remains a seminal text.

Bernays lived to endure a crisis of conscience, however. In 1933, Karl von Weigand, a foreign correspondent for the Hearst newspapers, returned from Europe with news that Bernays' techniques were gaining in popularity across the Atlantic. On March 13 of that year, in fact, one of Bernays most devoted acolytes had been named to a post that would change the course of world history. Joseph Goebbels had been declared Minister of Propaganda in Nazi Germany.

Adrian Hardie



HANNAH ARENDT

If the brilliant and beautiful Hannah Arendt, the German-Jewish intellectual who famously described the "banality of evil" at work in Nazi Germany, had not spurned a young suitor named Leo Strauss would Americans be killing and dying in Iraq? Not only did Arendt reject Strauss' affections, she spurned his ideas. According to Arendt's biographer, she told the embittered Strauss that a political party advocating his views could have no place for a Jew like him. Strauss bore the wound of her words for decades. Even today, his followers, the Straussians, despise Arendt. Could her rejection have been the stirring of a butterfly's wings that led to the inevitable desert storm?

LEO STRAUSS

The celebrated philosopher-king of the neoconservatives

forging America's radical new foreign policy was a controversial philosophy professor at the University of Chicago. Leo Strauss, who died in 1973, was little known outside of academic and think-tank circles until this year, but the influence of his ideas has long been felt.

"Why are so many Straussians in the Reagan Administration?" asked *Newsweek* in a 1987 article entitled "The Cult of Leo Strauss." "Some of their critics suggest that the brotherhood is committed to no less than halting the drift of modern democracy." The Straussians, observed historian Gordon S. Wood in the *New York Review of Books* the following year, are the biggest phenomenon in 20th-century academia.

His ideas emerge from his life experience. Strauss fled Nazi Germany for the safety of America in 1937, and blamed not fascism but the Weimar Republic's liberal democratic ideals for permitting the rise of Nazism. A classicist, he taught the works of Plato, Machiavelli, Nietzsche and Hobbes, instructing his students to look for secret "codes" in the texts. Truth, he believed, was the preserve of an elite few who might have to tell "noble lies" – an idea he lifted from Plato – to the uncomprehending masses. Are political entities, asked the charismatic Strauss, "not compelled to use force and fraud . . . if they are to prosper?"

"'Weapons of mass destruction' would be a noble lie," says Shadia Drury, a scholar who has written two books on Strauss, "because you're convinced this [war on Iraq] is the right thing to do and you are the wise few, the elite, who are leading the stupid masses, and the stupid masses aren't going to agree to sacrifice their lives for nothing – for the glory of the nation – unless their own survival is at stake." So you tell them their own survival is at stake.

Strauss believed that democracy, however flawed, was best defended by an ignorant public pumped up on nationalism and religion. Only a militantly nationalist state could deter human aggression, and since most people were naturally self-absorbed and hedonistic, Strauss believed that the only way to transform them was to make them love their nation enough to die for it. Such nationalism requires an external threat – and if one cannot be found, it must be manufactured.

While not bound by religion himself, Strauss rather cynically promoted religion as a tool to maintain an acquiescent population. Authority and discipline are key values for Straussians, and the masses need religion to keep them in line. "Marx called religion the opium of the people," says Drury. "Strauss thought the people needed their opium."

Neoconservatism has more complex roots than just the ideas of Leo Strauss, but it's hard to ignore the uncanny similarities between Straussian thought and the decisions emanating from



MACHIAVELLI

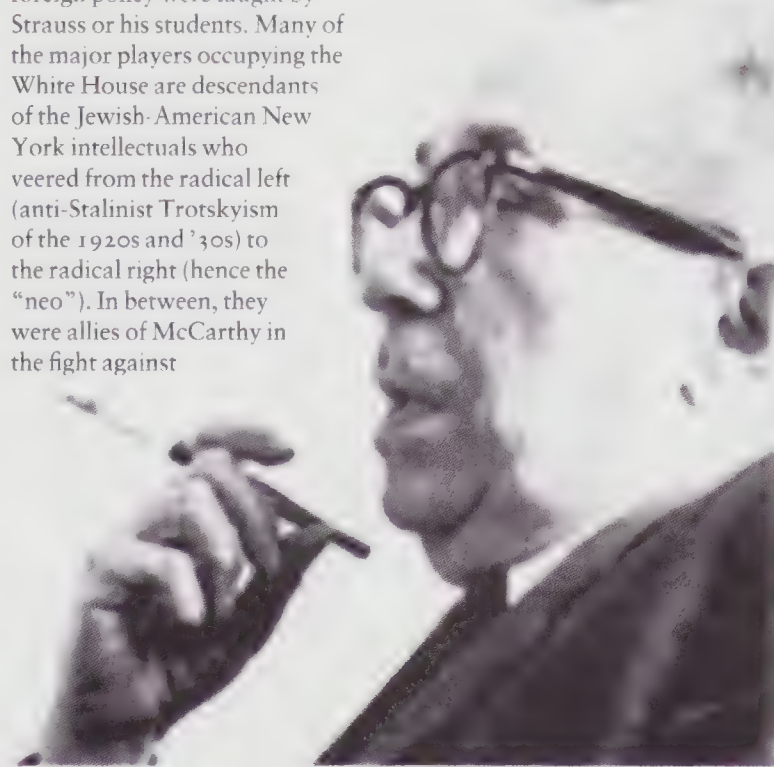


ARISTOTLE



PLATO

the Bush administration, where many of the neoconservatives in charge of foreign policy were taught by Strauss or his students. Many of the major players occupying the White House are descendants of the Jewish-American New York intellectuals who veered from the radical left (anti-Stalinist Trotskyism of the 1920s and '30s) to the radical right (hence the "neo"). In between, they were allies of McCarthy in the fight against



communism, and later joined the Reagan administration. They have nothing but contempt for the free-thinking idealism of the 1960s, with its emphasis on social equality (Strauss argued that the strong are fit to rule; the weak to be ruled), opposition to war (force is important and necessary), and feminism (Plato's "philosopher-kings" are, by definition, men). But it wasn't until the presidency of George W. Bush that they ascended to the pinnacle of power, bringing their ideas with them.

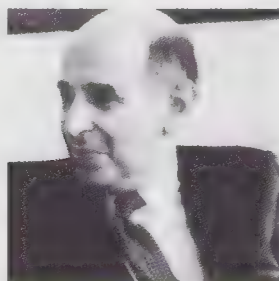
"In the course of the past year, a new belief has emerged in the town [of Washington, DC]: the belief in war against Iraq," wrote Ari Shavit in *Ha'aretz*, Israel's leading daily newspaper, in April 2003. "That ardent faith was disseminated by a small group of 25 or 30 neoconservatives, almost all of them Jewish, almost all of them intellectuals . . . people who are mutual friends and cultivate one another and are convinced that political ideas are a major driving force of history."

New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman to Ari Shavit: "This is a war of an elite." Laughing: "I could give you the names of 25 people – all of whom are at this moment within a five-block radius of this office – who, if you had exiled them to a desert island a year and a half ago, the Iraq war would not have happened."



ALBERT WOHLSTETTER

A mathematician and nuclear strategist at the University of Chicago (alongside Strauss and Bloom), Wohlstetter taught Wolfowitz, Perle, Shulsky and Achmad Chalabi, the American-backed contender for leadership of Iraq. This Pentagon advisor and RAND Corp. researcher helped pave the way for Ronald Reagan's Star Wars initiative.



ALLAN BLOOM

Strauss's star student, admired by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, popularized Straussian views in his book *The Closing of the American Mind*. A famous gourmand, Bloom spent his royalties on four-star hotels, Armani suits, Cuban cigars and big-screen TVs.



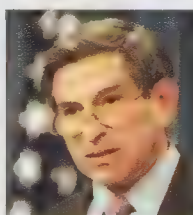
SAUL BELLOW

The Nobel laureate's memoir-like novel, *Ravelstein*, portrays his close friendship with fellow University of Chicago academic Allan Bloom (Paul Wolfowitz gets a bit part as the young Defense Department official who amuses Bloom with his phone briefings on the Gulf War). The insider account ignited fierce controversy by disclosing that Bloom was homosexual and died from AIDS, not liver cancer.



WILLIAM KRISTOL

Son of Irving Kristol (the father of neoconservatism and an admirer of Strauss), William Kristol is editor of *The Weekly Standard*. Kristol founded the Project for the New American Century, which brought together Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, William Bennett and the neocons on a platform of US global military dominance.



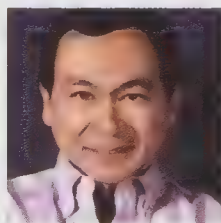
PAUL WOLFOWITZ

Dubbed "Wolfie" by the president, the Deputy Secretary of Defense is considered the chief architect of US foreign policy and the main proponent of war on Iraq. Wolfowitz studied with Strauss and wrote his PhD under Wohlstetter.



RICHARD PERLE

Perle resigned as chairman of the Defense Policy Board after it emerged that a venture capital firm he manages might profit from war on Iraq, though he remains on the board. Perle is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, located in the same building as the Project for the New American Century.



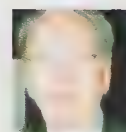
FRANCIS FUKUYAMA

A student of Allan Bloom, this leading neocon intellectual predicted "The End of History" – the perfection of capitalist society.



DOUGLAS FEITH

In 1996, Feith with Richard Perle and David Wurmser authored a strategy paper for Israel's Likud government. The plan urged Israel to re-establish "the principle of preemption," and suggested that the road to security runs through Baghdad. Feith's father was a follower of Zionist leader Vladimir Jabotinsky.



RUPERT MURDOCH

Dubbed the "neocon piggybank," Murdoch owns *The Weekly Standard*, which prints high-brow neocon ideology for the informed insider, and Fox News, which broadcasts the low-brow version for the ignorant masses.



WILLIAM BENNETT

Tied to Bloom and Mansfield, Bennett served under the administrations of Reagan and Bush Sr. The author of *The Book of Virtues* was recently discovered to have gambled away millions.



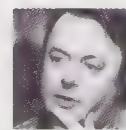
CLARENCE THOMAS

Absorbed Strauss en route to the Supreme Court.



ELLIOTT ABRAMS

Convicted in the Iran-Contra scandal, Abrams holds the Middle East portfolio at the National Security Council. An unequivocal supporter of Israel, he is the son-in-law of Norman Podhoretz, editor of the Jewish journal *Commentary*.



CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

The legendary contrarian journalist is a high profile example of "Straussian creep" on the left. A "humanitarian war" hawk, Hitchens served as a consultant to the White House in the lead-up to the Iraq War.

ABRAM SHULSKY

A Strauss expert and close associate of Richard Perle, Shulsky directs the Pentagon's Office of Special Plans, convened by Wolfowitz and Donald Rumsfeld to sift intelligence for evidence to justify the war on Iraq.

HARRY JAFFA

A student of Strauss, Jaffa introduced his ideas to Harvey Mansfield, who taught Andrew Sullivan and William Kristol at Harvard.

– Kitty Clark

THE LORD OF THE UNIVERSE, JESUS CHRIST, WILL SOON reenter the world, raising His cosmic battle cry to defeat the powers of Evil in the apocalyptic Armageddon. Sound a little like the evening news these days? But before the fireworks begin, the Biblical prophecies must be fulfilled, including Ezekiel 37:21.

"Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land." In other words, the Jews must successfully repossess the whole of Holy Land.

This is, in a nutshell (and we use that word advisedly), the founding faith of that all-American contradiction in terms: Christian Zionism. The Christian defenders of the Jewish state are a minority in the US, but that doesn't make them a fringe group. Some 15 to 18 percent of the American electorate count themselves among the religious right, following the teachings of leaders like Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson. Their "pro-family" stance on domestic issues is well known and influential: limiting women in leadership, banning abortion and outlawing same-sex sexual relations. Their influence on foreign policy is less sensational, but arguably more catastrophic.

With their unique injection of prophetic zeal, many Christian Zionists are more hardline in their support of Israel than the majority of Jewish-Americans. The movement nurtures close ties with Israel's ruling Likud party and other right-wing political organizations. They also send millions of dollars to support Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

While not every member of the Christian right is a defender of Israel, the Zionist brethren do have access to the broader movement's astounding resources. They spread the word via websites like Falwell's <worldnetdaily.com>; TV networks like Robertson's Christian Broadcast Network, which reaches 59 million homes; and a robust publishing industry that supports such *New York Times*

bestsellers as Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins's *Left Behind* series of novels. (The Christian apocalypse-thrillers have sold more than 50 million copies since 1995.)

The best known of Christian right leaders, Jerry Falwell, has publicly supported and funded Israel since 1979, when he was rewarded with the gift of a Lear jet. According to *Newsweek*, the ties became so close that, after Israel's 1981 airstrike on Iraq's nuclear reactor, the Israeli prime minister called Falwell "to explain to the Christian public the reasons for the bombing." The prime minister contacted Falwell even before he had spoken

to then US president Ronald Reagan. That same year, Falwell won Israel's Jabotinsky Award for his support – this despite an anti-Semitic streak that had him accusing Jews of being "spiritually blind and desperately in need of their Messiah and Savior" in his 1980 book *Listen, America!*

Similarly, the grand old man of right-wing Christian politics, Pat Robertson, was last year awarded the State of Israel Friendship Award by the Zionist Organization of America. Ten years earlier he wrote *New World Order*, in which his take on Judaism is clearly colored by that classic anti-Semitic hoax, *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*.



The alliance of Christian and Jewish Zionists is not altogether comfortable, of course. Beyond the Jews' prophetic return to Greater Israel, the two groups sharply diverge. According to Christian Zionist belief, the vast majority of Jews will die violently in the ensuing Armageddon. Only those who convert to evangelical Christianity will be saved.

But the two groups are now deeply entwined. Christians first forged close ties with Jewish-American supporters of Israeli expansionism in the 1970s and 1980s, as American Jews joined with the anti-Communist religious right to free the Jews and

Christians of the Soviet Union. The meeting of minds included many of the original neoconservatives – the philosophical sect whose ideology is now indelibly stamped on the Bush administration. Many of the original neocons, including the movement's founder, Leo Strauss, were Jewish, and the militant defense of Israel is standard-issue neocon dogma. It has also obviously influenced US foreign policy in the Mideast, particularly under Republican administrations. But again, the neoconservatives do not typify American Jews, who are divided on the issue of Israeli expansionism; only 19 percent voted Republican in 2000. With Jewish voters making up only two



percent of the American electorate, Jewish neocons are a minority within a minority, which might help to explain their willingness to embrace the funding and support of Christian Zionists who literally pray for a holocaust.

James Zogby, president of the Arab American Institute in Washington, DC, says the Christian Zionists share a similar worldview with the neocons – a world of absolutes, a confrontation of good and evil with no compromise, only endless confrontation or absolute victory. It's no stretch of the imagination to see the Bush administration as the populist

incarnation of the same message, with its "evil-doer" rhetoric and politics of perpetual war. Both the Bush neocons and the Christian Zionists also share suspicions about the global influence of the European Union and United Nations – though it's hard to accept that anyone in the White House, with the notable exception of the president, would believe the religious right's claim that these two institutions are instruments of the anti-Christ.

Still, even President Bush has been held to account by the faithful. Last April, for example, the president demanded that Israel withdraw its tanks from the West Bank; as a result,

the White House received 100,000 angry emails from the Christian right. The message is taken seriously. At its peak, the Christian Coalition, founded by Pat Robertson, had a membership of 10 million. It holds tremendous sway within the Republican Party; in the mid-'90s, it controlled the party apparatus in 17 states and held substantial power in 24 others. And now the religious right has one of its own in the White House.

In his recent book, *Made in Texas: The Southern Takeover of American Politics*, journalist Michael Lind posits that making the Mideast safe for Israel, not protecting the American public, was the primary motivation for the war on Iraq. Lind dismisses those on the left who cite oil as the motive, noting that oil companies operating in the Mideast have long favored a pro-Arabist stance and policies that ensure regional stability. He also rejects those on the right who try to link the conflict with the war on terror. Well before September 11, he notes, the neoconservative Project for a New American Century – major backers of which are now White House advisors – called for the invasion of Iraq, bombing of the Hezbollah in Lebanon and military pressure on Syria and Iran to end their support of terrorism. He adds that Iraq, Iran and Syria are bitter rivals, and that the terrorism they promote targets Israel, and not the US.

Bush's good-and-evil rhetoric, with its knowing wink to those who believe in an impending apocalypse, has spooked many abroad. In March, *Businessweek* reported that even "European geopolitical strategists with long ties to the US – people who can't be dismissed as nut jobs – are convinced that religious beliefs are the primary motivation for the Bush Administration." What matters even more, however, is the variety of Bush's religious revelation. Consider this possibility: for the first time in history, the leader of the single global superpower believes we are living in The End Times.

Adrian Hardie

My friend Daniel Barenboim – the Israeli-born musician with whom I co-sponsor music seminars between Israeli and Palestinian students – is most exceptional. He is exceptional because he understands what no Israeli politician understands: Much more important than fighting over who is right and who is wrong is the need for a gesture – a gesture of compassion, a gesture of acknowledgement and responsibility. No Israeli leader has ever, ever, made a gesture of this sort toward the Palestinians. Not one. None. Not one gesture saying, "We are responsible for what happened" in 1948 and afterward, the way the Poles have said, for example, about what they did to the Jews. Even the Japanese have acknowledged what they did to the Chinese.

One of the qualities that distinguishes Barenboim is that he was curious to see who we Palestinians were. Like so many Israelis, he grew up never meeting a Palestinian. But then he wanted to see us, to meet us. Not for the Palestinians' sake, but for his own. He wanted to understand because we occupy the same land. He wanted to look honestly at the whole picture.

What is missing, therefore, from the whole Israeli-Palestinian conflict is someone on the political level like Barenboim who provides a compassionate, universalizing view of the whole – someone like Nelson Mandela who will say "we can find a way of living together, each in our own manner, as equals, despite the past." The starting point of this future, though, is not a plan but a gesture – a gesture of responsibility for the past.

*Edward Said is professor of comparative literature at Columbia University.
This comment is from his talk on February 20 to the UCLA International Institute.*

YES, I AM ARGUING THAT THE ORIGINAL IDEA OF A JEWISH state, from the Balfour Declaration on down, was a mistake, and to establish it in an Islamic Middle East essentially by force and with the immiseration of millions of natives was a tragic mistake. We are reaping the awful results of that error today.

It is, of course, not so easy to know what to do to undo that mistake, but I would argue that a world that can make a state can unmake it. In its place one might establish a non-religious Palestine covering all of the original British Mandate in which Jews, Muslims, Christians and others would have equal rights and equal votes, as a few Israelis have suggested in recent years. Or a 'bi-ethnic/bi-national' state with equal powers to Jews and Muslims something along the lines of Switzerland, Belgium or a future Ireland – Switzerland, remember, used cantonization (and half-cantonization) to solve an even bloodier confrontation among Catholics and Protestants in the 16th century. Or an Islamic state that would be forced by international vigilance to give, and maintain, full religious and political rights to the Jews, who would then be free to settle in the West Bank and elsewhere.

The process need not be unduly rapid – and just the prospect of it might well be enough to put an end to the present *intifada* – and it should include an extensive international effort to resettle those Israelis who would not want to remain in the Middle East.

Given the skill and intelligence of the Israeli workforce one can imagine that a great many countries would welcome such settlers, even in large aggregates. The diaspora, after all, has existed since A.D. 70, far longer than the state has, and might even be thought of as the natural or historic role of Jewry.

I know full well that such ideas are an anathema to most Israelis, who after all have made the land their home in the last 50 years. But I would suggest that the way things are going their options in maintaining a Jewish state are limited: an apartheid state with Palestinians forcibly removed from Israel and no end to the violence; a Stalinist police state with an end to both violence and democracy; and a democratic one-person-one-vote state encompassing all Jews and Arabs, in which Palestinians will soon outnumber Jews.

Among these choices, abandoning the experiment of the Israeli state does not seem so far-fetched or undesirable.

Kirkpatrick Sale is a social critic and environmental activist from New York. His latest book is The Fire of His Genius: Robert Fulton and the American Dream (Free Press, 2001). This article excerpted with permission from Fourth World Review No. 120.

THE STAKES COULDN'T HAVE BEEN higher. On the block: rebellion versus orthodoxy, prime mindshare at an ivy-league school and the definition of American economics itself. All this in the battle to add a single class to the Harvard curriculum.

The scrap started on the other shore of the Atlantic, where intellectual insurgents in France and the UK have issued a demand for a new economics, declaring the current discipline "autistic" – lost in its own world and completely out of touch with the people and events that surround it. Following through, 708 Harvard students and alumni clamored for an alternative to the school's primary econ course, which the *New York Times* described as "a decidedly anti-tax, free-market-leaning introduction to economics."

Die-hard elders twice rejected a new class "focusing on the social consequences of global and domestic economic policy."

In the end, the post-autistics won the right for their class to be taught, but economics majors will not be permitted to substitute the new course for the existing conservative offering. Students can take the new course as an option, but the mandatory class continues to obscure the hamstrung truths of neo-classical economics.

Stephen A. Marglin, a professor and longtime advocate of a more inclusive and expansive economics, initially proposed the alternative course, saying that it need not teach that conventional economics is "flawed and wrong," but rather that economics as a science has "strengths and limitations."

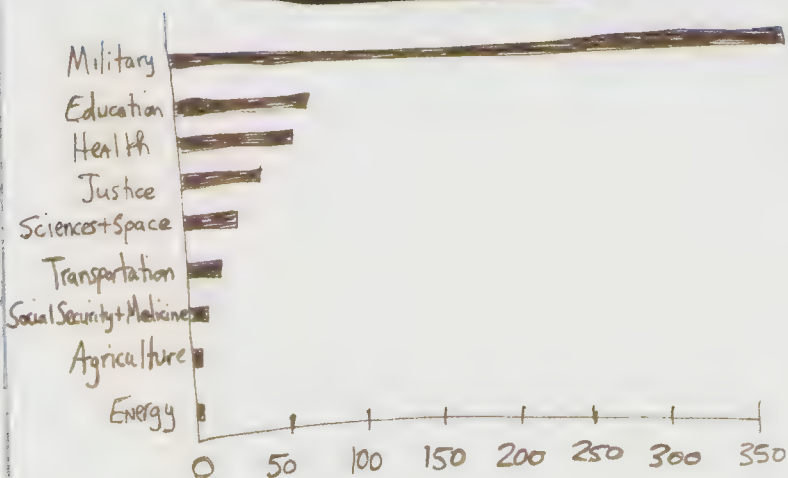
The established class had been taught for 20 years by Martin S. Feldstein – formerly the chairman of President Ronald Reagan's council of economic advisers, and a man many politicians and

economists consider a "likely candidate" to succeed Alan Greenspan as the chairman of the Federal Reserve.

Opponents argued that Marglin's so-called "more balanced approach" would divide students along ideological lines (the horror!) and that Feldstein more closely represented economic orthodoxy. Proponents countered that orthodoxy may be the problem, and that the discipline could not help but benefit from opening itself to a more critical approach. Disproportionately conservative, opponents of Marglin's class evoke images of the inquisitors who imprisoned Galileo; they, too, persisted in their incorrect, pseudo-scientific pursuits. For a time.

Clayton Trapp

time to
divest?



"Taking present values as of fiscal-year-end 2002 and interpreting the policies in the federal budget for fiscal year 2004 as current policies, the federal government's total fiscal imbalance is equal to \$44.2 trillion."

Huge numbers like \$44.2 trillion don't mean much to anyone without a comparison. So, consider: Uncle Sam's "financial imbalance" is 10 times the size of our current national debt.

In order to achieve current solvency, the government would have to raise payroll taxes by 68.5 percent, beginning today. Alternatively the government could cut Social Security and non-Medicare outlays by 54.8 percent immediately and forever. (How do you think either policy would go over at the polls?)

It's unlikely that either huge tax hikes or huge Social Security cuts will occur. Most likely nothing will happen. And so, the government's insolvency will grow much larger. By 2008 fiscal imbalance will reach \$54 trillion. To reach solvency at that point, taxes would have to increase by 73.7 percent.

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E. SANGER

GENS, July 2 — Ch-
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July 4th

BECAUSE my country has sold
its soul to corporate power

BECAUSE consumerism has become
our national religion

BECAUSE we've forgotten the true
meaning of freedom

And because patriotism now
means agreeing with the president

I pledge to do my duty ...
and take my country back.
<unbrandamerica.org>

Adbusters Media Foundation 604-736-9401 info@unbrandamerica.org



Another crowd-pleasing speech – sales are up, protests are down – and now it's time to give the fans a little face-time. He's the man of the hour and he wades into the crowd, shaking hands left and right, a firm one for the men, a squeeze for the ladies. A few more handshakes and – what's this? A folded note, slipped into his palm. A phone number? A business card? He stops a moment and – what the hell? What does it mean? He loses the smile and heads directly to the exit.



CORPORATE KILLS

SURGICAL STRIKES INTO THE HEART OF EMPIRE

Graffiti, 'zines, stencils, stink bombs, store invasions, pies in the face, boycotts, blackspotting, carnivals, viral demarketing, TV mindbombs, full-page ads in the *Guardian*, *Le Monde*, *Die Zeit* and the *New York Times* - this is a call for worldwide nonviolent actions against the three most wanted corporations in the world.

EXXON

- world's largest corporation
- denies global warming
- rejects green energy
- car culture, war culture
- the power behind u.s. oil

NIKE

- mindfuck marketing
- sweatshop cover-ups
- totally unrepentant
- the ultimate brand warrior



Altria

- new name, same philip morris
- decades of tobacco lies
- killed more than the holocaust
- now invading the third world
- #1 criminal corporation in the world

REDUCE SALES, UNCOOL BRANDS, REVOKE CHARTERS
CORPORATEKILLS.ORG

Protest Fatigue



At the start of the Iraq war, five billion people—over 80 percent of humanity—were eager to take on Bush and Blair. It was a historic global moment and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for activists. Boycott America groups sprang up by the dozen, people all over the world stopped drinking Coke and eating Big Macs and for a few weeks it looked like Brand America was really in trouble. But daily life took hold again... megabrand sales held steady... world leaders cut their compromise deals... the moment passed.

Brand America seems to be in ascendancy again. "Despite everything, America as an idea, as a brand, still works wonders," says New York marketing consultant John Allen. Commando-chiefs is the new street fashion, Bush is in line for a Nobel Peace Prize,

global consumer culture grows sharper and darker each day. It permeates everything; it's with us every moment. A permanent 9/11 and psycho crisis. What the hell happened?

But now the midsummer tide is shifting yet again. Iraq has become a \$4-billion-a-month sinkhole reminiscent of Vietnam, the weapons of mass destruction boobytriggle hangs like an albino over Bush and Blair, the US economy is spluttering and even Humisfeld's bravado is wearing thin. As the 2004 election approaches, people have not forgotten, they have not forgiven—the tantalizing possibility of a one-term presidency hangs in the air.

Kenn Ames

The 100 Million March Against Empire
SATURDAY JULY 3, 2004

A few days after American soldiers ambushed Turkish officers in northern Iraq, a Turkish newspaper reported that the ambush came after the Turks invited the Americans into their building for tea. Such a minor detail, yet to the Turkish people it carries the power of a metaphor – betrayal by a friend.

For decades Turkey has hosted the US as a houseguest, offering tea, always wondering if they were getting a fair share out of the deal. To many, America's new bully foreign policy delivers a simple message: the US will enter your house and drink your tea, whether you like it or not. The US image in Turkey is eroding, and nationalist fervor is getting increasingly irrational – a logical outcome when a nation's honor is at stake. I hear people saying that they want to take on the US, that "it's not Saddam the US is dealing with this time." I am not surprised.

Murat Ergin, Turkey

While the US talks about "old" and "new" Europe, it's clear that we Europeans are a more cohesive bunch than the White House cares to admit. In fact, we just thwarted American efforts to cripple the new International Criminal Court (ICC). American fear of the court is so great that the US is trying to sign bilateral immunity agreements with various countries to ensure that no American citizen ever stands before the court. Any nation that doesn't sign an agreement can expect to have American aid money withdrawn. But Mr. Bush doesn't know anything about European values. All 15 EU members unanimously support the ICC and recently obtained an agreement from the 10 EU candidates to respect the "common position" of the Union on the court. The only Europeans to sign non-extradition accords with America are Albania and Bosnia. Is *this* the "New Europe" with which the US hopes to rule the 21st century?

Yannick Lafleur, France



It's good that the Americans are finally questioning themselves; the sad part is that this has taken millions of people's lives all over the world and now a few thousand in the US. Maybe one day they will think about the evil drug circle. Drugs are produced in our "bad" countries under the pressure of "bad" guerrillas and paramilitaries. The "bad" narcotraffic organizations export the drugs to the "good" US and Europe. The drugs are exchanged for cash on the streets of "good" cities, and "good" corporate banks take in the money. Then some of the money is converted to weapons, which are also "good" – protected by the Second Amendment. The "drug profits" then return to our "bad" countries in the shape of guns in the hands of the guerrillas and paramilitaries. And the evil circle closes.

Kika y Andrés, Colombia

Gone are the hammers and sickles and glowering images of Lenin, replaced with lingerie models selling beer, cigarette company "taste tests" and television talk-show sets plastered with alcohol and appliance ads. It makes some sense: after decades of totalitarianism, Ukrainians, especially the young, go out of their way to embrace once taboo topics like sex or previously illegal activities such as gambling. Western and Russian corporations are only too glad to entwine those new freedoms with commerce. Gone are the high-minded ideals of democracy, free speech and human rights that formed the justification for the Cold War. Westernization in Eastern Europe has meant throwing out the best of one ideology – the egalitarianism and "we're all in this together" ethos of communism – for the worst of another – capitalism's crass materialism. In the Ukraine, "freedom" means unpaid salaries, crumbling social services, immense poverty and a nation and its people still out in the cold.

Sam Singh, Ukraine

Nobody took to the streets when the news hit that the El Salvadoran government had given in to Washington and agreed to send soldiers to Iraq to help with the occupation. Most people I talked to opposed the war in Iraq – Salvadorans know first-hand the horrors of war – but some saw it as just another knock to a country known for receiving its full share of natural (earthquakes and hurricanes) and unnatural (civil war, US economic hegemony) shocks. So El Salvador joins a motley crew of about a dozen other countries like Honduras, Nicaragua and Ukraine yielding to America's latest exercise of power. The strategy works for the White House: a Salvadoran soldier killed by a disgruntled Iraqi will certainly grab fewer headlines in the US than a dead G.I. from Texas.

There's no telling how long a soldier from El Salvador might be stationed in Iraq. There's also no hint that in return for their cooperation the US will reward countries like El Salvador with economic aid or more liberal immigration policies. I wonder what will happen when the first soldier comes home in a body bag. Will tolerance run out when it hits home that Salvadorans are being treated like cheap mercenaries?

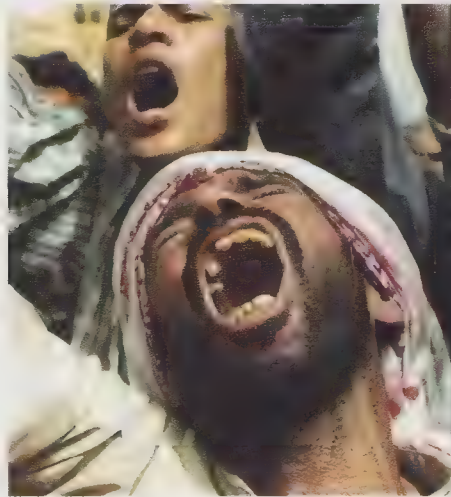
Monica Campbell, El Salvador

"Who is Tommy Hilfiger?" asked my Senegalese friend Alhassane. I could see he was already wearing a pair of Tommy jeans, or more likely in Africa, knock-off Tommys. His question seemed funny, even ridiculous. Who is Tommy Hilfiger?

"He's a designer, in America, very popular, you know – red, white and blue . . .," I started to stammer. Alhassane waited patiently. "He's very popular," I continued, running out of words. Suddenly, his question bothered me, perhaps because it was something that I'd never thought to ask. Who is Tommy Hilfiger? Who is Kenneth Cole? Who is Calvin Klein and why the hell is his name on my underwear? How had these names slipped into the lexicon of my mind and somehow become synonymous with baggy jeans, bad leather sandals and boxer briefs?

I looked up at Alhassane, still waiting to learn about the man sewn into the seat of his jeans. "Sorry, Alhassane, I don't know who he is."

Aaron Clark, Senegal



General Pervez Musharraf, the unelected military ruler of Pakistan, goes to see Bush at Camp David, agrees "in principle" to send Pakistani troops to Iraq, and Bush says thank you without asking to have the decision endorsed by the Pakistani parliament. The Americans are backing a military ruler who is destroying democracy, trampling political parties and re-writing a civil-military relationship on purely military terms. The champions of democracy in Washington sit quiet, look away. As long as Musharraf keeps capturing al-Qaeda fugitives, who wants democracy?

Muddassir Rizvi, Pakistan

At the end of June, for the first time since the September 2000 fuel crisis, New Labour dropped below the Tories in the opinion polls. It's north vs. south. In our village of Galgate, four miles south of Lancaster, Blair has always been despised as a worthless fake. Everyone knew he was lying about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. In the Plough Inn by the canal, people jeer the slimy southerner's voice, as Blair cants and smarms above them on the TV screen. Those long pauses in his delivery, as though talking to nursery children, infuriate.

The Blair product was designed to catch southerners' votes; its policies are repackaged Thatcherism. When the yuppies jump ship, he'll fall from power. A few train crashes, hospital closures, a few million jobs exported to the Far East later, and the party is learning the meaning of the headline, "Collapse of Support in the Labour Heartlands." Voters in northern towns like Burnley put up 25-percent-plus polls for the far-right British National Party. Blair's policies breed poverty and poverty breeds fascism. New Labour looks set for the dustbin of history.

Steve Booth, England



THE PRIMAL MOTHER-INSTINCT IS AT WORK IN IRAN. SIMPLY consider the figures: 70 percent of the population is under the age of 30, a tribe of 48 million youth, a civilization of juvenescence. The whole world can feel the urgency. The world wants to mother Iran.

On the one hand, there is the state of Iran itself, the overprotective, fear-instilling conservative parent. On the other there is global multimedia, the virtual mother, dripping with cool. The two may seem at odds in every way, but each is aggressively trying to seize the largest possible surface of the body of youth, to plant their flags and symbols as evidence. Spoon-fed Islam; spoon-fed Democracy.

"They don't want to be told what to think, what to wear, what to read, what to watch and how to behave." This is the buzz about Iran, the shorthand description used by every media outlet to counterpose Iranian youth with the stringent rule of the mullahs. But what about the US-based anti-government TV stations beaming Farsi-language programs via satellite straight into living rooms throughout Iran, advertising the virtues of democracy, consumer culture, secularism? They've been telling people what to think and do. Stations like National Iranian Television in Los Angeles even smell of the monarchy, especially when Reza Pahlavi, the son of the former shah, appears as a frequent guest on their shows.

Illegal satellite dishes and restricted internet access bring the rest of the world to Iran. While the dishes – which, if found, are confiscated by the government – pick up stations like MTV and American movie channels, they offer only reception, not interaction. The internet offers both. Weblogs – online journals – are popular; so far, it is estimated that there are 50,000 Farsi blogs, with a number of those hosting English versions as well. Blogs offer a platform for safe venting under the protection of anonymous internet identities, along with a sense of global community as web users reply to the bloggers' posts.

The world of Iranian bloggers, both inside and outside Iran, is clearly not representative of all Iranian youth, but it is an important, raw and uncensored source of insight. Ever since the bodies of Iranian youth became political entities, it has been harder to tell what has distilled in their minds.

Alireza Doostdar, a master's student at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, keeps a blog entitled "Persian Blogger Chronicles: An Ethnographic Journal on the World of Persian Blogs." Alireza (his blog name) surveys both Farsi and English blogs, often translating comments posted on Farsi blogs. "I do not view the blogging phenomenon in Iran as simply a subversive movement," he wrote in May of this year. "The diversity and sophistication of Iranian bloggers tells me that this is a much deeper and much more complex phenomenon."

Subversion and dissent do not always entail revolution. Sometimes the goal is only dialogue, or aimless rebellion or the improvement of already-existing structures. Despite declarations of a coming "democratic revolution," it seems highly unlikely

that Iran will drink the medicine of Western democracy that has been forced upon Iraq.

Alireza writes: "Iran, unlike Iraq, has a 150-year-old democracy movement, which started with a revolution that constitutionalized the monarchy and established a parliament during the Qajar period. The Islamic Republic was not established when clerics suddenly decided to get out of their *hujras* in Qom and invade Tehran. It was an important milestone in the evolution of a massive national movement, which has continued to evolve and change."

On the same subject, a student leader, Saeed Razavi-Faqih, emphasized last year during rallies in December that the student demonstrations are "not a counterrevolution but a completion of the present one," and that the "proud traditions and norms of Iran are what students seek to revitalize." In his blog, "The Eyeranian," the blogger Pedram writes that his experience living during the 1979 revolution and its 20-year aftermath taught him not to look for or advocate revolution.

There is a sense in Iran that the past has not been in vain, an idea that does not square with the West's cleaning-house overthrow of Afghanistan and Iraq. In Iranian director Jafar Panahi's film, *The Circle*, the past is a struggle, a time of trials, a time of discovery and experimentation that is useful for the future. "In my view, everyone in the world lives within a circle, either due to economic, political, cultural, or family problems or traditions," Panahi explains. "The radius of the circle can be smaller or larger. Regardless of their geographic location, they live within a circle. I hope that if this film has any kind of effect on anyone, it would be to make them try to expand the size of the radius."

The virtual mother has a different message: abandon your circle; jump from the past to the Western enclosure. The recent student protests began as demonstrations against the privatization of universities, but later became a protest against the government: President Mohammad Khatami, who promised reform but did not deliver; the unelected clerical establishment who continue to block the road to reform; and Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khomeini. The protests have been criticized as directionless, offering no clear alternatives. It is clear what the students do not want, but what do they want? Students who once shouted "Death to America" now are chanting "Death to Khomeini." The Minister of Information, Ali Yunesi, warned of a rift between the youth and the past: "We should not let the youth go into historical amnesia, as this could seriously threaten our national identity."

People famished for history, without a sense of the past – these are the people most susceptible to influence; they are the favorite children of the virtual mother. "This is a student movement, not an American movement," the young demonstrators declare, because they know they must resist both the present and the most obvious future. Maybe all revolutions are revolutions of the past.

Refqa Abu Remaileh

Necklace, bracelet, and watch by Bulgari.

Tan gloves by Ferragamo. Tan boots by Miu Miu.
Black boot by Alessandro Dell'Acqua.

I AM PRETTY SATISFIED WITH MY LEVEL
OF PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Just a little
- ☐ Quite a lot
- ☐ Very Much

I WAS EXCITED TO RECEIVE IT: *Emigre* magazine, No.64, an issue entitled RANT. *Emigre*, it seemed, had returned to publishing criticism and theory. The back cover promised that RANT would “challenge today’s young designers to develop a critical attitude toward their own work and the design scene in general.” I’m a young(ish) designer. I accepted the challenge.

Over the course of the '90s the pages of *Emigre* were the battleground on which much of the so-called Legibility Wars was fought, and RANT features many of the critical writers of that period. I am disappointed to report that this generation of writers is still largely mired in the arguments of that past era. It is only in the subtext of the same old discussion that one can discern the faint outline of the issues to be contested in the next design debates. Beneath the ritualized *sturm und drang* over style for style's sake one can hear the faint rustling of a new criticism, one that vigorously explores the connection between graphic design and its context. Unlike art, there is no pristine gallery or gilded frame for graphic design: it is integrated with the social and political context in which it was created. This unique context is an opportunity for us to distinguish our work and our criticism. The formal arguments of the Legibility Wars are no longer vital to the evolution of the field; we need critical writing that explores the *where* of graphic design as much as the *how*.

TYPOGRAPHY: GET OVER IT

The dubiously titled Legibility Wars took place in an era when typographic form was being pushed to the point of experimental exhaustion. Young designers at the time were reacting against the rigidly prescribed guidelines of what constituted “good typography.” They used letterforms as a way of visually representing philosophical ideas (in the case of the Cranbrook Academy of Art designers) or as a vehicle for personal expression. Ironically, in the pages of RANT we find these same designer-critics reserving their most virulent scorn for what they perceive to be abject or lazy typography – what the leading American design critic Michael Beirut once described to me as “fell-off-a-ledge type.” In RANT, work of this kind is generalized

as “the cult of default.” Apparently, the generation that championed transgressive typography has come to institutionalize its own ideals.

Regardless of the position one takes, the debate over typographic form and legibility is an exercise in mannerist hair-splitting. Those who argue against style for style's sake are still positioning graphic design as a pursuit concerned solely with form. They seek to make the impossible distinction between empty style and meaningful style. The futility of such parsing is bluntly outlined in “Quietude,” design critic Kenneth Fitzgerald's opening salvo in RANT, which contains an evisceration of Bruce Mau's coffee-table manifesto, *Life Style*. In a few blush-inducing paragraphs, Fitzgerald lays bare Mau's failure to distinguish between *good* lifestyle and *bad* lifestyle.

It has always been the role of the established designer to shake his or her head mournfully at the wayward type of younger colleagues. Perhaps the outrage over so-called “default design” is merely the latest installment in this intergenerational soap opera. Yet default design is an informed reaction to changes in the technology of typesetting and the focus of typographers. The latest version of Adobe InDesign (coincidentally advertised in the back of RANT) can hang quotes and optically adjust margins with some finesse. These tricks of the trade – once benchmarks of typographic refinement – are becoming defaults themselves.

Many young designers are wary of directing their efforts toward these fussy formal details. They have seen that type of purely visual exploration yield dissatisfying or inconsequential results for a generation of designers. No amount of visual exploration, for example, could have cured the existential crisis described by Shawn Wolfe in his RANT contribution, “What's My Motivation?” It was only by changing the context in which

he worked – starting the Beatkit™ anti-brand and getting involved in the “AWAKE” campaign to promote The Center For A New American Dream – that he was able to regain his love for design.

EXPERIMENTS IN CONTEXT

In “Towards Critical Autonomy or Can Graphic Design Save Itself?” Walker Art Center design director Andrew Blauvelt

advocates a new kind of design practice concerned with “an inventive contextuality.” He correctly identifies a new discourse of design “that questions not so much the form of design but the possibilities of its practice.” For many young designers, the client’s problem is no longer the issue – instead they are

concerned with *becoming the client*. Young designers are focused on creating a context in which they can do work that is satisfying and new.

That this novelty need not be based on formal qualities is what seems to most vex the veterans of the Legibility Wars. *How can something be new if it looks old?* they ask. *Don’t these youngsters know that what they are doing is just retooled modernism? Or Cal Arts work from the late ’80s?* They miss the point. Formal novelty is not of urgent interest to many young designers, and this disinterest does not stem from laziness or naivete. Not only is the style vs. substance debate not their fight (it being as much a relic of the ’50s as it is of the ’90s), it does not address the fundamental nature of graphic design.

As is noted in passing by many of the RANT writers, the defining characteristic of graphic design is that it inhabits a sliver of land suspended between commerce and culture. It is simultaneously art and craft, passion and occupation. Successive waves of technology have undermined our ability to define the activity of graphic design in terms of process or medium. The roles of typographer, word-processor, artist, filmmaker, editor, author and designer are in constant rotation. What remains distinct about graphic design is the unique context of its practice. The next phase of innovation and debate will be toward renovating this context – expanding our sliver of activity and influence.

I can already hear the imperious retorts from the new design establishment. In fact, I’ve already read them in RANT. In the

words of Denise Gonzales Crisp: “Been there, done that.”

Indeed, some pioneering work has been done to change the context in which the designer works. The writing and editorial consulting of Michael Rock’s 2x4 studio in New York and the fearless variety of Cranbrook designer-in-residence Elliot Earls’ work have annexed bits of the author and filmmaker territories respectively. For the most part, however, graphic design – even design that raises questions about context – is still critiqued in the paradigm of the ’90s. The arguments about whether formal qualities are arbitrary or superficial are getting less relevant by the minute. Jeffrey Keedy’s assertion that even the style of no style has to be designed is the best argument yet for abandoning this line of criticism altogether.

CONTEXT IN CRITIQUE

Groping for contemporary trends in graphic design, most of the RANT writers turn to recent work coming out of the Netherlands. In their published online chat, “Visitations,” Denise Gonzales Crisp, Kali Nikitas and Louise Sandhaus touch on new work from Goodwill and Experimental Jet Set, among other Dutch designers. Kenneth Fitzgerald cites *Dot, Dot, Dot* magazine for its new take on design writing, and Andrew Blauvelt points to another publication out of Holland, *The World Must Change: Graphic Design and Idealism*. In his essay “Modernism 8.0,” Mr. Keedy unleashes a critique of *Dot, Dot, Dot* that has all the glee of a *Saturday Night Live* parody. At his most vituperative, he raises questions that a new wave of designers may actually be interested in answering; for instance, “What do we need designers for?” But the critique of Dutch design in RANT gets bogged down in the dialectic of style vs. meaning. This is unfortunate, because work that attempts to recontextualize graphic design deserves to be critiqued in those terms.

The best work coming out of the Netherlands since the turn of the millennium – featured in books like *HD: Holland Design New Graphics* and *The New Handmade Graphics: Beyond Digital Design* – presents graphic design as an open intellectual pursuit, not merely a means of emphatically solving visual problems. Although many of these designers have adopted a formal vocabulary similar to the work of early modernists (including the use of Helvetica and grid systems), criticism that focuses on the connection between this visual style and early modernist ideology is a distraction from what makes Holland’s graphic design so vital. *Dot, Dot, Dot*, for example, is most

FORM.
FORM.
STYLE.
STYLE.
DETAIL.
DETAIL.

interesting because the designers have created a context in which graphic design continues to interest them. Within the publication they have undertaken an expansion of what constitutes graphic design writing. By not merely seeking their place in the established design press they have created what Andrew Blauvelt describes as "a space of autonomy for graphic design [which] affords an opportunity to engage in a more critical examination of its practice." Much work from the Netherlands shares this autonomous spirit. The early modernists advocated the opposite: the assimilation of design into the greater machinery of society and economy.

There are several environmental factors that nourish the inventiveness of Dutch graphic design. One is the long tradition of visual art and specifically the printing arts in Holland. Dutch critic Max Bruinsma has argued that a strong typographic tradition combined with extended economic prosperity has created a class of wealthy clients who consider original graphic design to be a critical part of their success. Graphic designers in the Netherlands also enjoy a level of financial support from their government and their society that frees them to be more adventurous in their work.

The Dutch government funds specific design work through project subsidies and grants administered by cultural institutions such as the Mondriaan Foundation. Publications are often funded by the government as well, and Dutch designers can apply for general support and travel grants. The government even gives grants known as *startstipendium* to help young designers launch their own studios. One of these grants helped Armand Mevis and Linda van Deursen open their own studio straight out of school, where they initiated and continue to inspire much of the design work noted in *RANT*.

Agencies of the Dutch government also commission a great deal of innovative design. Dutch Royal Telecom, for example, has long been one of the most respected graphic design clients in the world. Book designer Irma Boom worked for the government printing office, where she produced challenging publications on the government's behalf. Civic projects such as stamps and currency have consistently been entrusted to young and unconventional graphic designers as well.

The social and institutional support in Holland extends to design. The website for the Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam notes that tuition fees have been legally fixed at the equivalent of US \$1,626. *Legally fixed!* A year of undergraduate design

training at a comparable school in America averages around \$17,000 a year, with graduate tuition hovering near \$20,000. This is even more alarming when you consider that academia has been the only institution in American society that has consistently supported innovation in graphic design.

Fleshing out this context of contemporary Dutch design provides a valuable frame of reference. The critical pretense raises difficult questions for the designer. Am I satisfied with design's place in society? How are my educational and professional institutions supporting innovation in design? What can I do independently? Making these questions central to design criticism encourages the "socialization of design" advocated by Andrew Howard in his *Adbusters* essay, "A New Kind of Dialogue." It challenges us to affect change in our work, and maybe even our society.

CONTEXT.
CONTEXT.
ACTIVISM.
INFLUENCE.

THE PEACE DIVIDEND

The critical rehash of the grunge typography debate in *RANT* is peculiar in that almost no one acknowledges his or her involvement in the fracas. Rick Valicenti's rambling mea culpa, "6.26.02: Cranky," is a glaring exception. It is perhaps the most important article in *RANT* because it suggests a way past the post-traumatic stress disorder that cripples so much contemporary criticism. Valicenti takes credit for all ("I am the embodiment of culture") and admits to all ("We raped the street of its character"). Perhaps what graphic design needs is an opportunity for all sides in the Legibility Wars to come clean, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission of sorts. Then maybe we can move on and begin to examine graphic design as a process that inscribes economic and social context. A dialogue based on the presupposition that design is not only an open creative process but a conversation with the world beyond design may help move our profession in unexpected and reckless directions – a sure sign of growth.†

Dmitri Siegel is a designer and writer. He publishes Ante, a quarterly journal of design and art, and is currently working on a history of feedback.

"THE DESIGNER IS DEAD," PROCLAIMS HOUSE OF DIEHL, the self-described "leaders of the fashion revolution." HOD launched their assault in 2001 with a New York event called Fashion Automatic. Invited guests – "It Boys and Girls" – took to the stage with a "style DJ" armed with vintage and thrift-store clothes that were deconstructed and reconstructed within a quarter hour. *Voilà*: instant couture, a taste of Dada and 15 minutes of fame. Then the fashionista "co-creators" headed home with their works of art. Kind of like tagging a Duchamp urinal and carting it out of the museum.

HOD has since hosted dozens of events, launched a couple of custom clothing lines and re-introduced "Irony" to the streets of New York City. The word is emblazoned on a t-shirt you can buy online. For \$111. But is it anti-fashion?

The Imitation of Christ design team prefers a dose of sincerity. In 2000 they rallied to "hearken the eminent backlash" and "heed the echoes of dissent that have remained inaudible, buried beneath the white noise of mass production and uniformity." Like House of Diehl, iOC uses thrift-store finds rejigged and relabeled, with their pieces fetching thousands of dollars at high-end department stores. The group became a household name in fashion circles after staging a show at a New York funeral parlor, complete with casket and models-in-mourning. Last year's iOC show raised funds for Sweatshop Watch, but this year it featured topless models vacuuming in their underwear. Nobody knows what the hell they're up to, so might it be possible that they're genuinely radical? Even brilliant?

"Cheap chic" socialites like Bay Garnett aren't buying it – not when they can make the *Harper's Bazaar* best-dressed list in their second-hand clothes. Garnett edits *Cheap Date*, an "anti-fashion, anti-lifestyle" magazine about thrifting and kitsch. Founder Kira Jolliffe started *Cheap Date* to act out against "gang mentality and conformity." They run anti-consumer articles, shun the brand wizards and advocate jams like "shop-

dropping" (slipping "mangy" thrift-store finds into brand-heavy stores). "No amount of brand subverting can change a desire for the truth," declares Jolliffe. "But now we have high-fashion advertisers approaching us. The irony is too obvious." She worries the backlash is "backfiring," and admits that they're "not feeding starving children."

But Textile Recycling for Aid and International Development is feeding kids. TRAIID has nine shops in the London area that generate more sales per week than any other charity in the UK. At a centralized factory, TRAIID staffers with an eye for fashion sort through clothing donations from over 800 drop-off bins. About 40 percent of the donations are sold as fabric strap and the rest are cleaned and sent to TRAIID boutiques; some are redesigned by workers with fashion-school experience.

This kind of immediate, intimate, original design out of clothes otherwise destined for the landfill seems to have real potential to thin out the fashion herd mentality. Glossy mag editors just roll their jade eyes. "Anti-fashion, no-name branding – it's all fashion. You can't opt out," says Matthew Hawker of *i-D* magazine. "It's just a theme that comes around, usually during periods of branding overload when there is lack of consensus on direction." That is, lack of consensus *within the fashion industry*. What the rest of us think doesn't matter so much.

After all, the big brand designers aren't dead – they're busy appropriating our every move. Even subversive campaigns like Generation Terrorist's anti-fashion Steal Something Day was lifted this year by designer Marc Jacobs. He chose actress Winona Ryder as this season's spokesmodel after she was caught stealing \$6,000 of designer clothes (including a \$760 Jacobs shirt). The ads feature Ryder with a pool of designer clothes around her feet, looking ever so mischievous. What's next? Designers defacing their own labels with black circles? A mass-market line of Steal This Shirt t-shirts?

Danielle Egan

ART CONTRIBUTORS 49



Stacy Greene
Gwen (cover image);
Lisa; Roberta 1993
www.stacygreene.com



Lee Powers
www.leepowers.co.uk



Ryan McGinley
Untitled (Ski Mask); Puke
Peter Hay Halpert Fine Art



Izima Kaoru
Saeki Hinako wears Junya Watanabe 2000
Courtesy Von Lintel Gallery NY
www.vonlintelgallery.com



Elinor Carucci
Revlon 97; My Mother's Lips 96; Nipple hair 96; Nail 2001



Zoltán Jókay
Munich 1998



Chris Frey
from *Portraits* 99-01, 2001



Dave Niddrie



Julie Sleaford



Ari Versluis and Ellie Uyttenbroek
Mohawks - Rotterdam 1998
from *Exactitudes*
010 Publishers, 2002



Paul Seawright
Courtesy the artist and
the Kerlin Gallery Dublin



Shari Erickson
Reproduced from the book
Salmon Nation: People, Fish, and Our Common Home. Learn more
at www.salmonnation.com



Jean-Pierre Khazem
VII from *Llama Project* 1999;
East of Eden
Courtesy Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin, Paris



Ryan McGinness
from the *Model* series



Debbie Attias
from the series *Aaron & Sebastian* 2000
Courtesy K48



Shadafarin Ghadirian



©Lauren Greenfield, From the book
Girl Culture, Chronicle Books 2002
Aya, 16, in her basement bedroom,
looks for an outfit to wear to school,
San Francisco, California



Timothy T. Dowling
Wannabe installation view
Red Eye Gallery, RISD, 2000
Courtesy K48



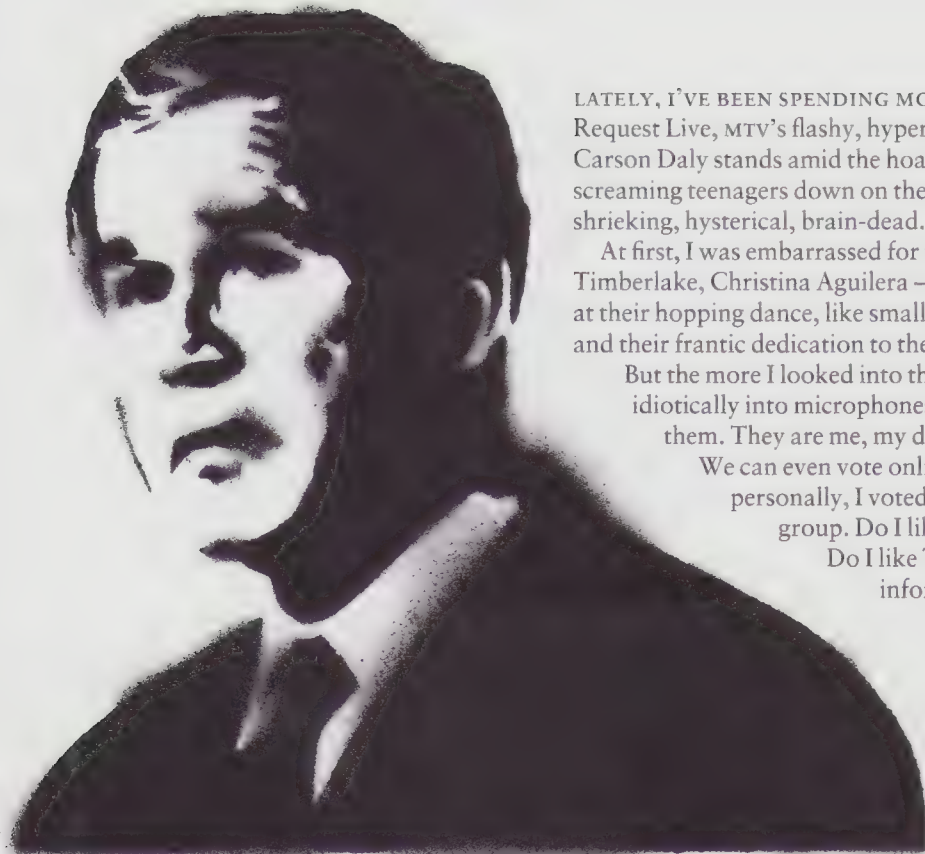
John Sinal
Food Stylist: Murray Bancroft



Dimitris Maniatis

I WISH I COULD CHANGE THE WAY I LOOK

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Just a little
- ☐ Quite a lot
- ☐ Very Much



LATELY, I'VE BEEN SPENDING MORE AND MORE TIME WATCHING TOTAL Request Live, MTV's flashy, hyper-caFFEinated version of "American Top 40." Carson Daly stands amid the hoards of screaming teenagers in the studio, screaming teenagers down on the street – all those young, healthy lungs, shrieking, hysterical, brain-dead.

At first, I was embarrassed for these kids. I scoffed at their hunger for Justin Timberlake, Christina Aguilera – their one-night stands of spectacle. I laughed at their hopping dance, like small, flightless birds on the Times Square sidewalk; and their frantic dedication to the program, which we insiders only ever call TRL.

But the more I looked into those faces (smooth, beautiful, gabbling idiotically into microphones), the more I developed a strange affinity for them. They are me, my demographic, my hunger, my desire for voice.

We can even vote online for which musicians make it or break it – personally, I voted for Jay Z. I am part of the world's largest focus group. Do I like Eminem's new single? Do I have pimples?

Do I like Twix? I am heard but I am voiceless. I am informed but I know nothing.

A pretty, blond boy in a FUBU jacket is looking up into the studio from the crowded street. He is holding a sign that says "Blink-182." He sees the camera pointed at him and starts screaming. I know at once that I am him. I know that this is all of us, the global mind. I want to be heard so badly I'm screaming.

Jared Maher

ONE-TERM PRESIDENT

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Go to <google.com>, type in "weapons of mass destruction" and hit the "I'm Feeling Lucky" button. Up pops a 404 error message: "The weapons you are looking for are currently unavailable. The country might be experiencing technical difficulties, or you may need to adjust your weapons inspectors mandate." Designed to look like a real error message (complete with a bomb icon that links to the <amazon.co.uk> page for the dvd *Dr. Strangelove*), the site was created in February by a Birmingham pharmacologist not as an antiwar statement, but as office humor. The gag gets funnier as the no-WMD clock ticks on.

Subverting Fox News' "We report. You decide." tagline, <agitproperties.com> was doing a brisk business with their parody t-shirts for "Faux News: We distort. You comply." Hits had finally dwindled to just a few hundred a day, when Fox got wind of the satire and sent a cease-and-desist letter. Now, thanks to the publicity, t-shirt sales are booming, and web hits are soaring over the 41,000-per-day mark. Also on sale: "O'Reilly Youth" t-shirts, an item Fox's lawyer found "highly offensive." "Now isn't that a hoot," said the website's founders in a press release, "to be accused of 'incredibly poor taste' by a representative of the network responsible for such benchmarks of good taste such as *Temptation Island 3*, *Joe Millionaire* and *Stupid Behavior Caught on Tape*."

George W. Bush is feeling the heat. Even before the war on Iraq, groups like the Fellowship of Reconciliation petitioned to have the president tried for war crimes in the International Criminal Court. When US forces couldn't find Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, citizen groups launched a campaign to impeach him. With the countdown to the 2004 election already underway, a movement is building to bring the clown down.

525 Reasons to Dump Bush

A cheeky catalogue of misdemeanors and evil-doing. www.525reasons.com

1000 Reasons to Dump Bush

Honesty, economy, war, education – take your pick and read the record. www.thousandreasons.org

One Term President (.com)

Still more reasons why Bush won't see another four years in the White House www.onetermpresident.com

One Term President (.org)

Downloads for a street-level counter-campaign (see image on this page). www.onetermpresident.org

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR BODY! TAKE control of your mind! PRA is not about how you look but how you feel. Tight abs don't mean shit if you're a spineless fuck who can't think for yourself. We aim to inspire, empower and have a good time. The PRA fitness revolution starts in your mind. Free your mind and your ass will follow.

Punk Rock Aerobics is a gestalt that transforms its own space. Take two certified (they swear) aerobics instructors who don't play by the rules, a box full of bricks, a bag full of dirty foam mats scavenged from god-knows-where, a boom box and a roomfull of eager, if awkward, participants and you get some sort of magic. Because its crucial ingredients are people and music, PRA can happen anywhere. There is no hulking pre-fab florescent gym, no noxious slogans about goals and determination. The only anthems we hear are the real ones: "Time is a bitch . . . I shoulda been rich," "Somebody's gonna get their head kicked in tonight" and "When I need a friend it's still you." On cold-as-razors Monday evenings, we take over a typically bustling hub of the choked Boston music scene. It's fun to be doing aerobics on the very same floor that you could be standing on, in a colorful haze of sweat and smoke, watching a favorite band. The deserted stage hums with the lingering presence of great shows past and the promise of great shows to come. People are changing in the corners even as T.T.'s changes into the Land of Misfit Aerobics. There is none of the manufactured polish, the exhausting dazzle of your typical workout scene. Gals of all ages – and even a few unabashed males – show up wearing obsolete band t-shirts, mismatched socks, thrift store sweatsuits and boxer shorts.

We are a motley bunch, to be sure, but the Outlaw's Approach to Fitness is our bread and butter. The message: "Nobody's too cool for school. Don't worry about how stupid you look. Just keep moving."

And by god, it's so true! The tension that melts away as we do the Teenage Kick and the anger that dissipates during the Dee Dee Ramone Lunge is miraculous. We pogo during Freak Scene and pinwheel during Roadrunner. We do some strange adaptation of the air guitar, cooked up by Hilken the dance student. Maura wonders aloud why her ass is so stiff. We Beat on the Brat. My job is my brat. My boss is my brat. Punch punch. We move left and right, sometimes in unison, sometimes like pinballs. I can never get the dreaded V-step right, but it sincerely does not matter. The cardiovascular segment is divided by a grueling few minutes of hefting bricks with PRA spraypainted on them in pink and green. Finally, it's time for the dirty foam mats. We do leg lifts to Kraftwerk and four different types of crunches to "Now I Wanna Be Your Dog."

The delirious release lasts little over an hour. Punk Rock Aerobics is marshaled to a close by the distribution of chocolate

from a doctored-up Wheaties box with our instructors' faces plastered on its front.

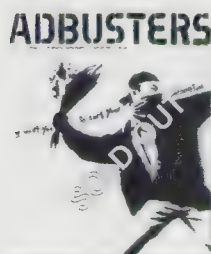
I won't lie to you, sisters. I emerge from T.T.'s feeling good. My feeling of goodness contains neither that guilty subtexture of "I should be doing more" nor that niggling sense of isolation ("I don't belong here") that plague your typical gym experience. As I wolfishly swallow my piece of chocolate, I take a moment to be proud not just of moving my ass – but of my small role in a fun, physical mode of expression that takes on a life of its own, and expands way beyond the sum of its parts.

Punk Rock Aerobics is held every Monday at T.T. the Bear's Place, Boston, at 6:30 p.m.

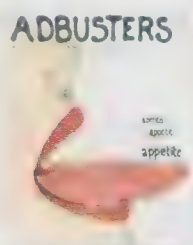
<www.punkrockaerobics.com>



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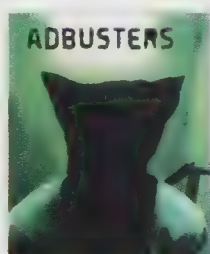
43 Curb Your Consumption



44 Appetite



45 I Want to Change My Look



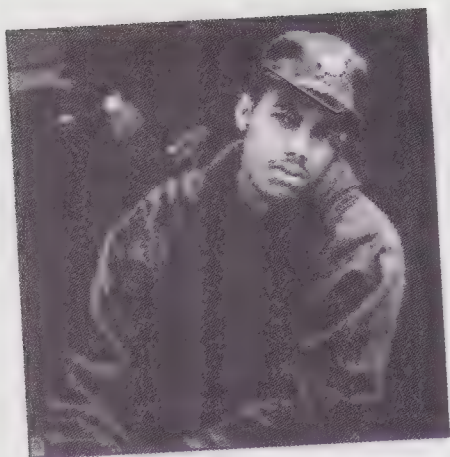
46 Are You in Denial?



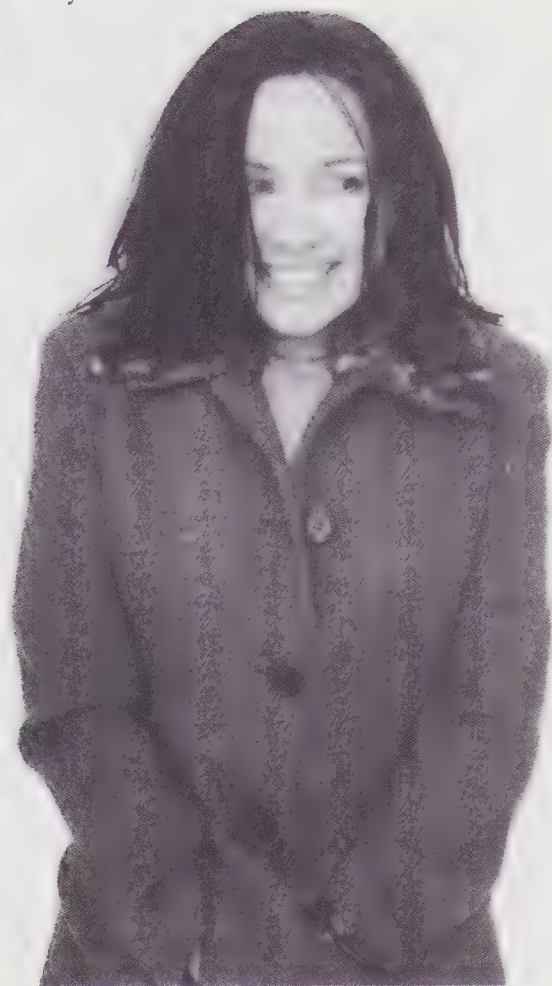
47 Nightmares of Reason



48 Us vs Them

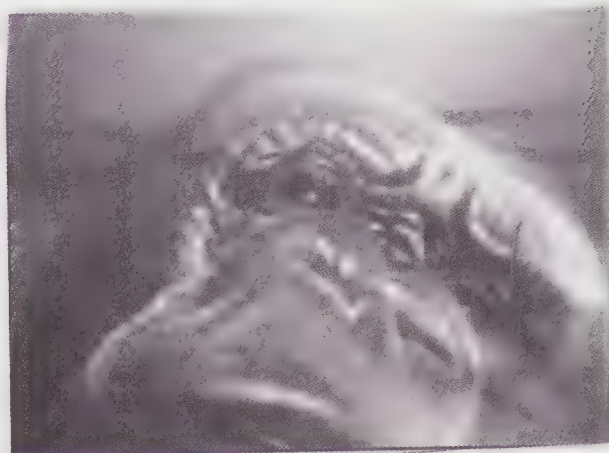


angry dude



petite babe

Gonilla

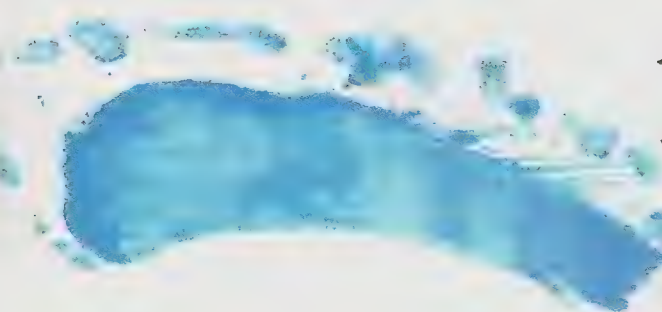


While you were getting your teeth whitened
I stopped by your place
I poked around a little, but first I washed your dishes
and cleaned your downstairs bathroom
I counted your shoes
twelve
six pair
and your husband's
twenty-two
pair
I washed my face with your soap and your husband came home and
made love to me
he didn't say a word the whole time he was here
I just sighed and thought
Isn't it always like this
I smelled some of your things
your hairbrush, and some things I found scattered around on the floor
beside your bed
but it made me feel ashamed
so I just tidied things up
and left
when you come home you will see that there is not really much to do
so maybe you can just relax on the couch a bit
and listen to this rain
or if the rain has stopped
listen to the drips
and if even the drips and drops have stopped when you come back
from having your teeth whitened
you can just sit and listen to the wet.
That's what I would do.

*Jason Wachtelhausen is a regular
contributor to <www.somewhat.org>.*

easy as coloring inside the lines. The pros teach their techniques on one half of the face and ask their students to replicate the look on the other. These pages: Makeup, Scott Andrew; hair, Jimmy Paul. Sitings editor: Paul Cavaco.

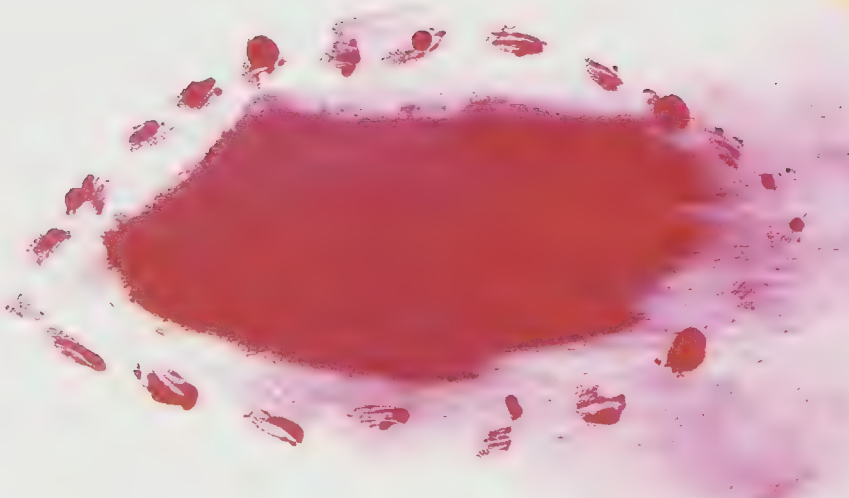




Is your life a project?

Do you give a shit about
anything?

Can you still — get angry?
— be spontaneous?



ital For six weeks ^I haven't wanted sex with anyone other than my wife. Not Anna Kournikova on an FHM magazine cover. Not Halle Berry in a blockbuster movie. Not the perfect curves with pouty lips in beer commercials.

This even though many women in the area of Haiti where my wife and I live (we moved here a month and a half ago from Princeton, New Jersey) are attractive and often partially naked. You can see more bare breasts in a day here than in a monthly issue of Playboy – usually out bathing in the yard, but sometimes a neighbor is only wearing a skirt as she cooks or chats on the porch.

One night the sensuality around me – the skin, the fluid movement, the dancing – did find form in a sexual dream about Naomi Campbell. You can't expect all cultural images to dissipate immediately, but even that was better than media-induced lust. At least what was embodied in my dream was latent sexual tension about real people, whom I've actually seen or greeted with a kiss on the cheek. Much of my previous lust – manipulatively produced in me to draw my attention to products, whether pizza or alcohol, movie tickets or magazines – has vanished since moving to the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

Not, of course, that Haiti ^a is paradise. There are too many serious, seemingly intransigent problems to list, let alone fix. But one of the wonderful gifts is shelter from the vicious consumer-advertising storm that whips our American-Canadian culture – our individual psyches – into a whirlwind: consumer feeding corporation feeding politics feeding greed feeding consumer feeding corporation feeding politics feeding greed *break?*

We didn't, though, move from idyllic Princeton to a village a couple of hours outside the capital of Port-au-Prince on this island in the hurricane belt just to escape the winds of consumption. We aren't living in a small room under a corrugated tin roof in a home with a three-generation Haitian family just to avoid the billboards of I-95 and Route 1. We came to work with a small organization focused on literacy and education. Hopefully upcoming chapters of our life in Haiti will have titles like "Working as partners," "Gratitude" and "How is American foreign policy continuing to harm Haitians?" But the first footnote to the story is a welcome protection from the weaknesses that my culture cultivated in me, and then exploited.

Even though in the US I didn't have cable, listened to NPR and drove a Honda CRX with more than 200,000 miles on it, the tentacles were long and my desires easily piqued. Against all reason,

spell out

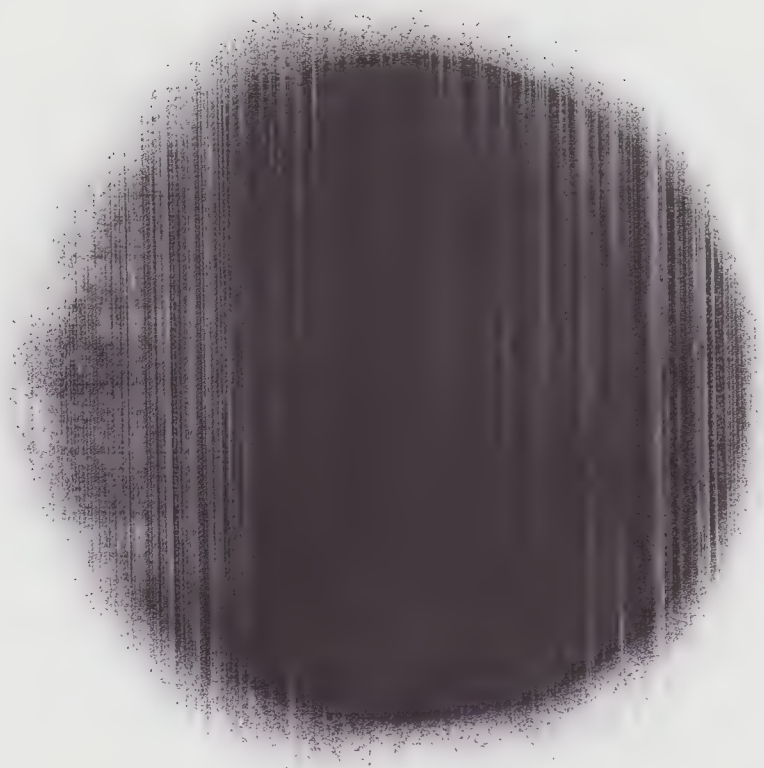
before my flight to Haiti, a tiny part of my brain was occupied with when and how to see Leo DiCaprio's two new movies. I was upset about a promotion that I deserved but wasn't given, ~~and would have welcomed the accompanying (albeit minimal) recognition and raise.~~ I somehow knew that Demi Moore was looking pretty damn hot for 40, and could accurately recite the milestones in her life since the end of her marriage to Bruce Willis. I confess to having pre-Haiti addictions to The Sopranos and Dr. Pepper. The Sopranos addiction was immediately and painlessly killed on arrival, including the fiction of the Ba-Da-Bing girls and Adriana, with those legs, that ass, those skirts. The Dr. Pepper addiction proved much more resilient, though impossible to gratify since Coke and Sprite have a local monopoly.

Now I'm eating beans and rice or plantains every day, I don't even own a bike, ~~and I'm earning a tenth my previous salary (though I'm rich by Haitian standards). Before sitting to write this, neither super-sizing nor upgrading nor celebrity nor promotions had even once flitted across my brain.~~ I don't care about any of that anymore, and I'm happy to have other things occupy the remote corners of my mind.

Economic deprivation, as faced by the majority of Haitians, is not, of course, an alternative to consumer culture that I would choose for anybody. Coaxing enough food for your family from a small plot of depleted soil, let alone slum-dwelling, is not a romantic return to "simplicity." But here, I glimpse a freedom in the dedication to something of utmost significance – as saints and prophets, both ~~secular and religious, have always known.~~ ~~My escape from the cynical, distracting winds of marketing seem like a tiny, initial taste of that freedom.~~ Yes, stepping out of the whirlwind of false needs and false promises is possible in New York, Minneapolis, Vancouver or Austin. People are doing it. But it's hard. It's hard even to realize how caught up you are.

So I've escaped sex as an all-powerful sales device and find myself in, ~~what is~~ on the surface at least, a very promiscuous culture – with open joking about multiple girlfriends and open talk about men's mistresses and second families. But at least it's between real people – not with internet porn stars or Britney or Christina or the latest one-name pop plaything. Reality is comforting and inspiring, like tonight, as I lie in bed next to my wife with the warm tropical air making our skin slightly sticky where we touch.

Kent Annan



the new game ~~is~~

you demand the impossible



the new style ~~new~~

you play what's not there



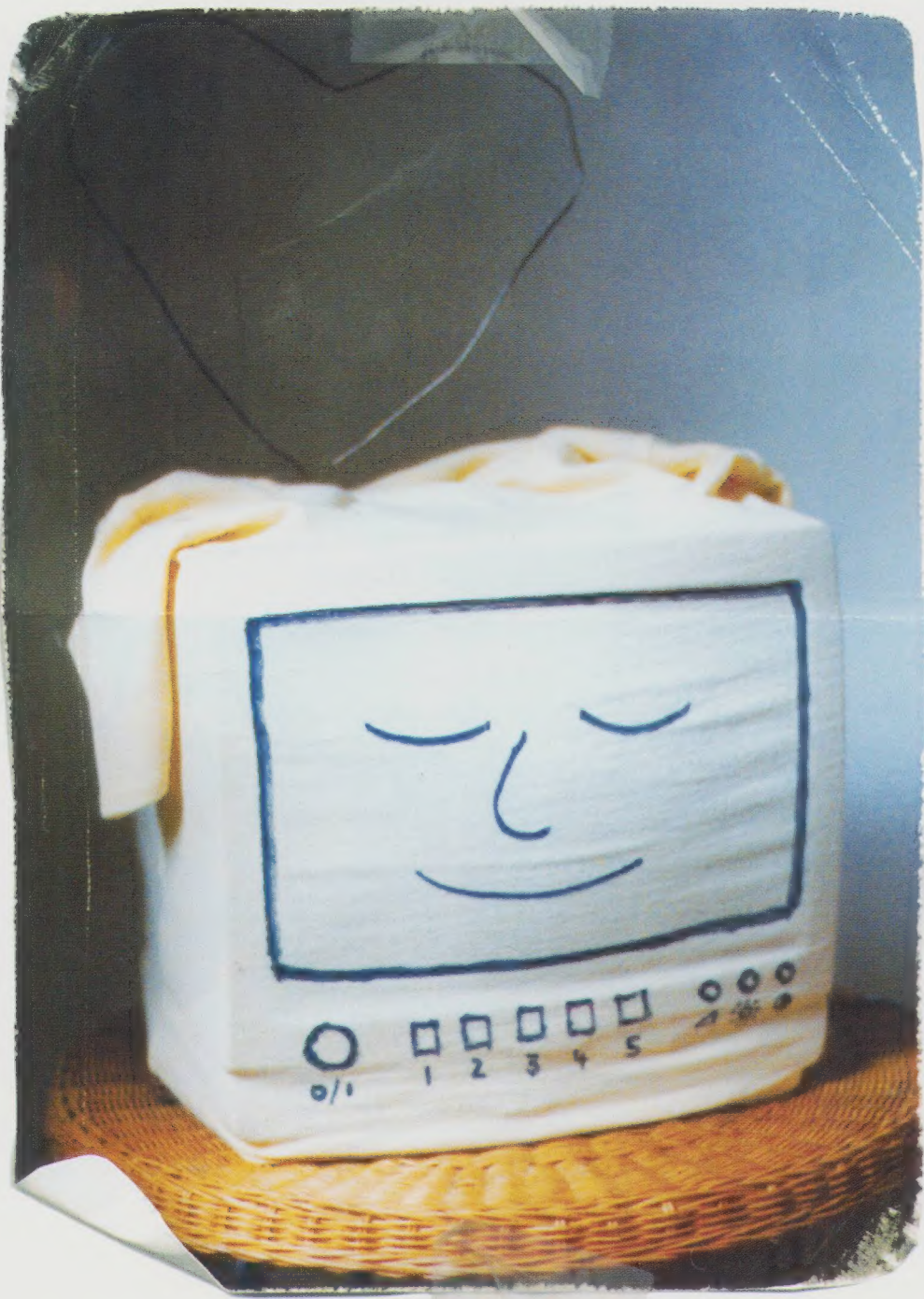


IMAGE: ROB EDWARDS, AMANDA CANNON AND ROSALIND GLOSSOP, AUSTRALIA

the new cool
you wander off into the night
and soak up the moonlight - - -



phil knight had a dream. he'd sell shoes. he'd sell dreams.
he'd get rich. he'd use sweatshops if he had to.

then along came a new shoe. plain. simple. cheap. fair.
designed for only one thing: kicking phil's ass.

the unswoosher

buy it. blackspotsneaker.org
sell it. info@blackspotsneaker.org